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TRAVEL LETTERS

W. R. MINTER

Photo by W. R. Minter, 1910

EARTH'S MOST SACRED SPOT—*Calvary.*

Travel-Letters

from

Palestine and the East

By Rev. W. R. Minter

Pastor Presbyterian Church,

Lincolnton, N. C.

PRESBYTERIAN STANDARD PUBLISHING CO.

CHARLOTTE, N. C.

1910

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TO

MY FATHER

JOHN R. MINTER

THIS LITTLE VOLUME

IS AFFECTIONATELY

DEDICATED

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PREFATORY.

This brochure is an illustration of the fact that it is the unexpected that often happens. Its contents constitute a series of letters by Rev. W. R. Minter, Pastor of the Lincolnton Presbyterian Church, written during a tour of the Holy Land and Europe, for the Presbyterian Standard at the urgent solicitation of its Editor. The tour itself was of the nature of the unexpected, and writing about it as it progressed equally so. It was a case of reluctant yielding to urgent appeal. No such task had ever been undertaken by the author and naturally there was a shrinking from it. But the letters are written and the thousands who read the Standard were delighted and instructed by them. They proved to be entertaining and illuminating. The story of much that had not been the subject of attention by other writers was told in a charming style. The naturalness of the presentation made them popular, and the truth about people and institutions and the face of nature and the works of man as seen were woven into fascinating story. The columns of The Standard were enriched by them. As was to be expected, there was a widespread desire to see them published. Out of this desire they appear in this attractive form. We congratulate those into whose hands this charming series of letters may fall. It will add to the interest, charm and instructiveness of the library of any home.

P. R. LAW.

Charlotte, N. C., October 4, 1910.

LINCOLNTON, N. C., TO ALEXANDRIA, EGYPT.

Every land is holy since God made, and is in and over every land. Still there is a sense in which only one land is holy. And that because its mountains and plains and cities, its fields, flocks and flowers, its peoples and laws and customs, are woven into every part of our Bible; because of those holy ones who lived and wrought there for us; and holy because of the divers times and places and manners in which God has here revealed Himself to His people, and through chosen vessels to all the world. But most of all, holy because of that Holy One who here had His cradle and home, His workshop, pulpit and school room, His Golgotha and Olivet. And because of the future when that strangest of people shall turn unto Christ, and when instead of the ancient city of Jerusalem, now in ruins, the New Jerusalem, which furnished the last and perhaps the most beautiful picture of heaven, shall be let down out of heaven, may Palestine truly be called the Holy Land.

To visit this land, walk its ways, commune with its choicest souls in their old homes and in the light of the Land to read the Book, is a privilege to be coveted by any one, and particularly by one whose sole work is to preach the Gospel here revealed. In the good providence of God this privilege came to the writer, and after due provision for home and church, with grateful heart, he left home on March the third for New York.

A day here without being maimed or killed, we felt reasonably safe for the rest of the trip.

Five days' delightful voyage on the splendid Carmania, of the Cunard line, with alternating calm and rough seas, with the seven ages of man all represented, with people of

every financial, physical, mental and doubtless spiritual condition, brought us to the Azores. A "hot-box" or its equivalent, made us six hours late, so that instead of arriving at 10 a. m., and spending the day ashore, we did not arrive till our leaving time (4 p. m.) So while the mails were exchanged and other nautical things attended to, the passengers gazed at the beautiful panorama before them. The island is a long mountain rising out of the sea, clad in spring's freshest green, dotted with hundreds of Portuguese homes, surrounded with the tiniest, yet tidiest garden spots, while nearer the shore is the little capital city of Ponta Delgada, skirting the harbor line. At a distance these islands look as if some one had sliced off horizontally Hogback or Mount Toxaway, Tryon Peak and other good neighboring mountains of North Carolina and set them down in the sea.

About five hundred miles southeast brought us to anchor in the harbor of Funchal, capital of the Madeira Islands. These also belong to Portugal and are different from the Azores, chiefly in that the mountains are higher and more rugged, the city larger and the vegetation more tropical. Here we stopped for eight hours and each one according to his heart's desire spent the day. Of this I shall speak more particularly at another time.

Another five hundred miles and we were sailing through the Strait of Gibraltar. To our South stood out the Pillar of Hercules in the continent that produced Moses and sheltered the tender Saviour. Africa! Land under the pall of Islam and the spell of the fetich! Through long sickening centuries of sin, poor Africa! Yet, as if to silence the gloom of the mental panorama, land also of Moffatt and Livingstone and Lapsley. And yet, as I sat on the hurricane deck, watching the sun disappear behind the northermost mountain of Africa, now far to the west, despite Christian South Africa and the marvels of missions in Uganda and our own Luebo, the thought of her still Christless mil-

lions, put into my heart man's appeal in the hour of his helplessness, to One able and mighty to save—"How long, O Lord, how long?"

Eight hours at Gibraltar gave every one opportunity to see all that could be seen—the battleships in the dry docks and behind the sea wall; and the mighty mountain of rock. At its base is the cosmopolitan little city with its narrow, steep streets, in which are the costumes, languages and wares of a dozen nations. The fortress occupying practically all of the Rock is forbidden ground to the traveller and so we looked at it from afar. The English soldier was never out of sight, scores of holes in the granite sides of this natural fortress were visible out of which cannons sternly looked, over its top were telephone wires, signal stations of every kind, while the interior of the Rock is known to be honey-combed with tunnels, in which is enough ammunition, guns and men to demolish any navy which might unbidden try to pass through the strait. This Rock is very valuable, but I am glad it isn't mine. We should be thankful that of all nations, England is its owner. About one-half mile from the northern extremity of the Rock is the neutral zone, a strip one-third of a mile wide, without house or tree, belonging to no nation or individual. South of this strip paces the British sentinel, while across the zone is Spain, where stands her swarthy defenders dressed in their uniforms of red, white and blue. Here is Linea, a town of 30,000, with one church building, seating not over 500 (if it had pews in it; as a fact there were none) and with its bull ring with seating capacity of 12,000. Preaching in the morning, bull fighting in the afternoon was the program for the approaching Easter Sunday.

I looked into a dirty little school room in which all seemed to be studying or reciting together. All the drinking water of this city is hauled in jugs on backs of donkeys from some springs in the country. A jug of water costs two cents, but judging from the faces of the children you would think

the price was much higher. Here ignorance and dirt, superstition and poverty form a quartette that ceases not day nor night the same dirge that this unhappy land has had to listen to for many, many generations, and all this because she killed or exiled her only citizens who had the power to redeem her. Certainly in so far as Linea is a sample, the avenging nemesis is not yet through with Spain. Though, as many of your readers know, there is now in its beginning an industrial revival in Spain, which let us hope, will also not stop short of an intellectual and spiritual awakening, too.

Nearly nine hundred miles farther, in sight most of the way, of the coast of Spain, France or Italy, and we were in Italy's chief seaport—Genoa. Amid an amazing mass of shipping, our tender wound its way to shore. Of course, among several interesting sights, we visited the house where Columbus is said to have been born. When I saw that steep, narrow, winding and dirty street in which this house is located, I didn't blame him for wanting to find a place where there was more room and less dirt, nor for taking great risks to do it. Campo Santo is the beautiful cemetery of the Catholics in Genoa. Outside are separate graveyards for Protestants, Jews, Greeks and those of no creed. We can't describe the beauty of this place, even if we had no limit as to time and space. It is a long marble colonnade, enclosing a square, in which the poor are buried, while on both sides of this marble gallery are the tombs of the rich. Each tomb is an artistic design in faultlessly white marble and of exquisite workmanship. The tomb of a father, for instance, has on a high marble base his head carved in perfect likeness, while before him stands his widow lifting their baby to kiss the father, while beside the mother kneels a larger child—all this in marble of snow! And there were hundreds upon hundreds of these, some with fresh flowers, some with funeral lamps burning before them, some with relatives bowed in prayer about them. It

was in part beautiful, in part pathetic and sad, and as I walked over and among all these tombs, I found the unbidden tear in the eye while there came to mind that beautiful poem, "O why should the spirit of mortal be proud....." If the Catholics err greatly in extravagant cost and attention and in other ways of showing respect for their dead, do not the broom-straw and brairs in hundreds of church and town graveyards in our Southland reproach us for our neglect?

On such a trip, there are times of pleasantry when any slight thing out of the ordinary seems especially funny. We have had most fun, I believe, with the language. In going over a villa at Linea, where the keeper spoke only Spanish, one of the ladies wishing to be shown the parlor (the house was unoccupied), went through a series of signs which if not readily understood was perfectly explosive to the rest of us. In a restaurant in Naples, I tried to tell our waiter (who spoke only Italian) to bring me the headwaiter (who did speak English). With a bow he went and was soon back with a schooner, or some kind of a ship, filled to the gunwales with beer! And the laugh was on me. In Genoa, four of us took a drive, guiding our cabman by a map of the city and by calling to him when we wished to return to our ship, "Nave Carmania," "Carmania porto!" etc. From all of this, I fear the humor will have leaked out before it gets to North Carolina, but to us in its Italian setting, to put it mildly, it kept off the blues.

Besides the language, the different kinds of money afford no end of fun. We already have had English, Spanish, Italian and French money, and tomorrow will add to our list Egyptian. It is a daily sight to see one of our party who has had one of his Travellers' checks cashed in some foreign money bring up a handful of coins and call in all his neighbors to help him count it.

The most interesting day's journey was reserved for the last days. On the 20th we passed within a mile of Strom-

boli, a small mountainous island, with a peaceful little village at its base, while out of its crater near the top poured a volume of smoke, similar to the smoke from the chimney of one of our large cotton mills. Then through the Strait of Messina, with its Scylla and Charybdis, and the cities of Reggio and Messina, so recently destroyed by earthquake.

From our ship both cities were close at hand, and the finest buildings, comprising most of the business center of Messina, could be seen to be still in ruins, while at each end of this mass of ruins were hundreds of electric lights in the early evening. In time the whole ruined section will doubtless be rebuilt. They never get in a hurry over here.

As I write this "Finally," we are less than twelve hours from Alexandria, and if these rambling remarks seem very, very long, I plead in extenuation of my guilt the fact that from Lincolnton to Alexandria is, in the language of a little North Carolina four-year-old, "a far piece."

THREE SUNDAYS AT SEA.

From New York to Alexandria is an eighteen days' voyage on our ship. The time lost in making five port calls en route as well as the time taken in deflecting far to the south to touch at Madeira and then to the north of a direct course to call at Genoa, makes the trip longer in miles and days than a direct route of continuous sailing.

In these eighteen days are three Sundays, of which I wish especially to write.

Our first Sunday was our second day at sea. We had just time enough, after watching New York, with its wonderful environs, creep away in the west, to find ourselves, as related to our new home.

Sunday dawned with fair sky, calm sea and happy passengers. The orderliness throughout the day, the refraining from the indoor and deck games so popular on week days, and the degree of quiet and even reverence manifested constituted an agreeable surprise.

The chief or legal service was conducted by the Captain, who, assisted by the Purser, read the Church of England service. They read it well, too; though I consider that the Captain won out over the Purser by a few lengths. Both their hymns and tunes were unfamiliar to me, but I enjoyed the singing, which was largely done by the crew. Indeed, I enjoyed very heartily the whole service. The crew occupied the middle of the dining saloon, while the passengers were on both sides. A collection was taken for the Seamen's Charities of New York and Liverpool.

Simultaneously with this service was a service by the Roman Catholics in another part of the ship. Indeed, on every day the Romanists have held services at will from 4

a. m. to 10 p. m. And yet permission for a Sunday evening service to be conducted by a minister of one of the largest denominations in the United States was refused. This seemed an unnecessary, un-American, not to say un-Christian, restriction. If the English are dense, they are not so dense but that they know who to refuse, and who not to refuse. A refusal to Rome to hold its services means a boycott of every Cunard ship; a refusal to Protestants means nothing.

The second Sunday we were due at Funchal, the capital of the Madeira Islands. An early breakfast was provided that a good (?) start might be got by all who desired to take in the sights. And practically all seemed to desire just that thing. Here was our ship anchored from early morning till 4 p. m. Yonder to the north was an entrancing view of a mighty mountain rising steeply out of the sea, clothed in the glistening green of an early tropical morning, dotted with picturesque Spanish-looking houses up the mountain side and with the city of Funchal fringing the water. And it was Sunday morning! And here arose among us, a question not new, to be sure, yet not unimportant—the ethics of Sunday sight-seeing. Not to go, was largely to miss seeing yonder fairy island and perhaps to be branded a hypercritical Sabbatarian. To go was to ride in the oxen sled, to take the funicular car to the top of the mountain, have yourself kodaked in some pretty dell, and slide down the slick plane of the mountain side, a la toboggan, and "have more fun than a barrel of monkeys," as one expressed it.

To many, very many (alas! let it be said) this situation presented no question. The possibility of their declining to go was beyond their wildest imagination! Why, of course, they were going. And they did—and many of these claimed to be disciples of Him who, while He "broke" the Sabbath law to heal a poor fellow and thereby kept it, did not so far as the record shows, lead a Sunday excursion to Hermon's

Photo by W. R. Minter, 1910

DESCENDING THE PYRAMID OF CHEOPS.

Heights or elsewhere. To another set, their anticipated romp (including, in addition to things aforementioned, the purchase of various kinds of souvenirs), required a little "explanifying." And as a few listened, we knew not whether we grieved more at heart or laughed more at the stunts of these logical and ethical acrobats. Quoth one: "I am on this trip to learn all I can and to improve myself, and therefore I must go." "It's our only chance," chirped another. "Why, didn't Jesus say the Sabbath was made for man?" said a Sunday school teacher, in a convincing tone. "This is a case of the ox in the ditch," said a clerical brother, as he started off with his kodak to prize the poor beast out. That poor ox is one of the greatest of martyrs. Every week he is pushed in the ditch that the ox-heroes may rescue him. But all these went, too. Among the many marvels of this wonderful age, few, if any, can surpass the agility, the adaptability and the gutterperchability of the conscience of the average church member. And a few of us, among whom was a Presbyterian elder from Rochester, N. Y., and one or two more of our boat circle, had a delightful, quiet Sunday morning on the ship, till about 10 o'clock, when we went ashore to Sunday school and preaching. Now wasn't that romantic? I went to Sunday school in the mission of our Northern Methodist Church, where I was warmly welcomed, and enjoyed the English part of the service, and even that in an unknown tongue—Portuguese.

I then went to the little Scotch Presbyterian church, where in the mornings all the service is in English. The order of worship is exactly the same as we have in Lincolnton, save that the doxology was not sung in the beginning. The congregation was small, the sermon or address on the Bible in presenting the British Bible Society, was ordinary, yet had in it sound and precious truths, the hymns (not the singing) were beautiful and devotional, and I felt it was good to be there. I was greatly interested in these two foreign mission stations, the first I ever came into actual

touch with. But of this I cannot speak now. My walk back to the ship took me through a public garden shaded with stately palms and magnolias, and perfumed with the mingled sweetness of ten thousand flowers blooming at my feet. Truly "every prospect pleases." Then four or five blocks past stores and shops of every kind wide open, and their tawdry wares piled on the sidewalks, while the Sabbath air was rent with a hundred profane tongues, hawking with mongrel English their useless tinsel. Truly again, "and only man is vile." Back on ship, in quiet and with my well-beloved New York elder, we had not a pleasureless nor a profitless Sunday afternoon.

To have written as I have written may be interpreted by the casual reader that the writer is assuming to himself a superior personal merit. This he distinctly disavows. He did no more than from a child he had been taught was the law of God. This precept of childhood, received in faith, after a careful observation, some study and more reflection, so far from being weakened in the writer's conviction, has become more and more confirmed. A holy eye found very much of imperfection in all of us that day, though I trust He also saw in many an earnest desire and effort to walk in His statutes. That evening and the following day there was a general and more or less serious discussion of the Sabbath. And some believed, some were obdurate, while others said they would hear of this matter further.

The afternoon and night before our third Sunday drenching rains fell and driving winds lashed with waves the sea-wall of the harbor of Naples, behind which our ship lay sheltered, while an army of men coaled our ship and the passengers were permitted a few hours ashore to get a glimpse of the city. In contrast with the storm of Saturday how symbolic of the Day of Rest was the calm of the next morning. Upon awakening we found ourselves steaming down the southwestern coast of Italy on a waveless sea, with a cloudless sky and in a flood of glorious sunshine.

Another thing that heightened our appreciation of this Sabbath's peace was the violent contrast between the narrow, noisy streets of Naples, filled with the jabbering jargon of ten thousand nimble-tongued sons of Italy, gesticulating and articulating, too, as if the town was afire, and the quiet and reverence ashipboard, so inviting to worship.

Still another thing that added to the quiet of this Sunday was the fact that at Genoa and Naples, fully two-thirds of our passengers left us. And there was the same abstention from all games, to which I referred in speaking of our first Sunday.

The Catholic and English church services were held at the same time as usual.

Among the worshippers yesterday morning was Mrs. Grover Cleveland, who boarded our ship at Genoa, and is going to Alexandria.

During the afternoon each one did that which was right in his own eyes. Conversation on deck or in drawing rooms, books, papers, and a good many Bibles engaged these sunny hours. For myself, I preferred to read my Bible in my room. While later in the afternoon, in a quiet and favorite corner of the topmost deck, looking over the blue of the Mediterranean, clothed upon with the glory of the Italian sky—a sea over which during three thousand years have sailed millions of ships, merchant crafts, fighting squadrons, royal barges, and a certain insignificant ship bearing, however, a most significant passenger—I read and —— thought. I think I thought most of this last ship, its noted passenger and this passenger's great God. At least I hope I did.

TWELVE DAYS IN EGYPT.

One in Alexandria, nine in and near Cairo, and two in Port Said—a short stay, true, yet long enough to bulge the eyes with seeing. After riding into harbor at Alexandria under the beautiful arch of a before-breakfast rainbow, we were greeted by our dragoman, Soliman Moussa (Solomon Moses). He is well named, for he's both wise and meek, and to these qualities adds an imagination that is equal to any emergency. What he doesn't know, he tells any way; what no one knows, he tells with unctuous assurance. One of the first things a traveller in the East learns is to use his sifter, else he will eat more bran than bread. But I don't mean to go back on Solomon. He is the best in Egypt.

With him to guide and to do our fussing and fighting over "backsheesth" with the Arabs, we saw the conventional, yet wonderful sights seen by all tourists. We had the two last days for independent action and I devoted them to seeing the state hospital and prison, the new government school and university, and the missionary work in the city.

Egypt, so far as we have visited (and we speak only of this section), is a land without a hill or a mountain, without a spring and virtually without a well (well water is brackish, so they prefer the dirty water of the Nile), a land without a pine or oak, hickory or poplar, maple or ash (indeed without forests of any kind, though there are a few scattered trees), and so a land with scarcely a wooden house and without a gable roof; yet this great valley has brought down to it every year the fertility of far distant hills and mountains, and is beautiful with its green fields of clover and wheat, its roads and canals lined with palms, acacias, sycamores and orange trees.

Here the old and the new meet. In this, the largest city of Africa, I have daily seen the finest express trains beside long camel trains. The bray of the donkey and the honk of the automobile mingle with other inharmonious noises in the street, while the mummies of Egypt's old kings and legions of their subjects almost jostle the modern tourists in the aisles of the museum. Beside the rock-ballasted, double-tracked railway, we saw as we sped by, hundreds of flocks of sheep, watched by shepherds whose crook and flowing robe took us back to the time of Abraham; while under the wires over which was silently speeding the world's latest news, the humble fellah drove his buffalo oxen as with a crooked stick he plows his crop, as his fathers did four thousand years ago. In this age of machinery, and of so many modern implements, it is almost incredible that these farmers have neither buggy, wagon nor cart, neither horse nor mule (instead is the camel and donkey); no implements, that I have seen, after several trips in the country, save the one-handled plow, the short-handled hoe, a hand scythe and then two hands of almost infinite patience.

Being a land, largely without minerals, timber and manufacture, these people fall back upon the Nile and the tourist.

In front of our hotel moves a daily panorama of every Eastern race, costume and condition, It is interesting to note the stages in the evolution by which an Arab changes his flowing robe for European coat and trousers. You see all these stages at once at any hour. He changes all but his fez; that he holds on to as if it were part of his anatomy.

As to government, Egypt nominally is under Turkey (for which name she pays about four million dollars annually), but really, as your readers are well aware, is under England, for which trouble she is paid as the Philippines pay us. England's reward is the envy and suspicion of Europe, and the ingratitude and a considerable amount of animosity from her thankless protege. I do not pretend to be able to understand the tangled web of politics here, but I have seen

on every hand enough not only to warrant, but even to compel the exclamation, "Great is England!" The patent-medicine man's pictures of "before and after taking" are not a circumstance to bankrupt and all but hopelessly sick Egypt, before and after taking her twenty-seven years' treatment of Anglasia. Soap, sanitation and disinfection, modern prisons, hospitals and schools, justice, dignity and discipline, new streets, new-made laws to govern them and new-made men to walk them—all this and more bear the mark of the Briton—yet lest you misunderstand me, may I add, that great as is her work, very, very much more like it remains to be done.

Let it be said also in justification of these people, that like all other nations, they desire to govern themselves, and. as is usually the case, they think they are competent for this task before they really are. Then, too, as if the intermittent vassalage of this hoary people to every great world-power for four thousand years or more, were not enough, she has until recently suffered most unjustly from unprincipled traders and from criminals of Christian Europe! These classes would commit every kind of crime, for which they would be tried by the consul of their country, which usually meant no trial. The government was sued for heavy sums in those days as readily as a North Carolinian sues the railroad. On one occasion, for instance, when receiving a European, the Sultan is said to have told one of his attendants, "Please shut that door, for if this gentleman catches a cold it will cost me ten thousand pounds." I mention this to show that it is not an easy thing for an Egyptian, so long accustomed to being pillaged by foreigners, to believe England to be a benefactor rather than a plunderer.

But talk about problems! Here they are—industrial, sanitary, political, racial, intellectual and religious. I know we have more at home than we are solving right, but com-

paratively, we have no problems. Or they are problems that differ from these as the first sum in addition differs from trigonometry (I believe that's as far as I got in mathematics). And yet nothing is too hard for God; especially in the day of His power when His people become willing. There is, I believe, amid all these problems, more real hope in Egypt today than at any time in all her tragic centuries.

EGYPT'S DEAD RELIGION.

I have neither time nor desire to be critical or exhaustive. I have no information to impart that may not be found in the libraries of many of the Standard's readers. My purpose is rather to write simply and popularly, some of the impressions and reflections that fought their way through my brain as I stood in the presence of this dead past.

Here was my first personal introduction to a religion that is dead. It certainly is dead and I certainly am glad. And like many other travelers in this land, I have been making a post-mortem examination. There was not time to go to the greatest ruins at Karnak; besides there were as many tombs and temples in the vicinity of Cairo as I could stand. We went to the site of Moses' Alma Mater where stands a granite obelisk as the last remains of this long-defunct institution. No religion can exist without some kind of school and here instead of teachers and students were clover and camels.

The tomb (or pyramid) of Cheops was visited and climbed, though I did not explore the interior. Another day took us twenty miles or more to the pyramid of Sakkara, which lies a mile out in the Lybian desert. A mile farther in the desert, far under the yellow sand are the tombs of kings and of their gods. Even a king's tomb, with all the elaborate hieroglyphics, though full of interest, was less interesting to me than the tombs of the sacred bulls. In long corridors of stone, lined on both sides with large niches were the marble sarcophagi where these gods were buried at their decease! The tombs of these gods are all empty now. Stacks of bones in different museums—not a resurrection—

is the explanation. Such a picture of death I have never seen—tombs, far underground, of mummied kings and princes, marble vaults in which reposed for centuries the bones of these kings' gods; over all these, crumbling temples and pyramids, and again over and around all these, a horizon of sterile desert sands, and again coverings over the desert of a rainless sky and a scorching sun! And as if to make more complete the overthrow of these gods—beetles, cats and bulls—their mummies or skeletons were made to line themselves up in the museum in Cairo, where we irreverently inspected them, while on every corner the street huckster peddled their images. In this setting, the fact of our God being still alive, being Life and imparting life seemed a more precious possession than ever before. From these pitiful tombs I looked with new gratitude unto Him who saith, "Behold, I am alive for ever more."

And there comes this query: Can we Christians of today prove that four thousand years from now our religion will not end in a similar delusion? We believe it will not so end and we do well so to believe. It is capable of proof that amounts to a demonstration. Would it hurt those who read this to marshal some of the evidences of Christianity, or to examine well the foundations upon which they are building?

To see the massiveness of these temples and pyramids is to admire their mighty builders. To quarry, transport 500 miles and erect a solid granite shaft 60 feet long and at one end ten feet square, elicits our wonder. Figure after figure, some in marble, some in limestone, some in wood, all thousands of years old, seemed just about to speak to me last Tuesday in the museum. The architecture of these people and their art, their mathematics and astronomy; their ideas of a resurrection, judgment and future life, compel us to regard them a remarkably learned people. Yet with all this wisdom they knew not the true God but "became vain in their imaginations and their foolish heart was darkened."

The wisdom of man today, great as it is, unaided by the revelation of God, is foredoomed to as disastrous an end. Man today can, unaided by God, build a flying machine, as these people thus unaided built a pyramid, but just as these people failed in their unaided wisdom to find the true God, so must fail the wisest man today, unaided by revelation. To see these mummied hands, which when in life did their best to fashion the gods they worshipped, makes God's divers and luminous revelations of Himself more pricelessly precious than ever. A passenger on a strong ship that has weathered the gale, feels doubly thankful when he sees other voyagers on some unseaworthy craft, lie dead among the wreckage after the storm.

As we have intimated the creed of this dead religion contained some articles of faith that are true and worthy of all acceptation and their lives show deeds and traits deserving of our emulation. They looked upon this life as but a preparation to live and in their way, (which alas! was a false way), many of them spent it with a fidelity, with a patience and painstaking that we so often fail to attain unto. Their religion taught them to prepare for death, and over four hundred million embalmed bodies and all but everlasting tombs to contain these mummies, are the pathetic evidence of their diligence! The stress they put on the eternal beyond is pathetically and pitifully told by the mummied pigeons, turkeys, bread and cakes they were wont to lay on the tomb of their dead. With these, his body would feed upon when it came to life and be strengthened to go on its new journey. In the Cairo museum we saw some of these fowls and cakes, but they looked far from appetizing. Shall we to whom God has so clearly revealed, and for whom our Saviour has especially prepared our eternal Home show less interest and fidelity in entering through His grace? And how much better to insure our resurrection is a Saviour than a pyramid. Shall the disciples of the latter out vie us who trust in the former?

Here in these ruins is tragedy! Not partial, but total tragedy. Upon the stage of Egypt before the curtain was rung down, closing the awful drama, all lay dead! All—men and gods, homes and temples, things temporal and eternal, principles and practices—all dead. Seeing and touching this corpse of a long-dead religion, a richer meaning came into these words familiar to us all: "Wherein God, willing more abundantly, to show unto the heirs of promise, the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil."

FOUR EGYPTIAN UNIVERSITIES.

Who would know well any land, with not only its past, but also its future, must know its schools. Above its battlefields and tombs, in interest to me were the schools of Egypt, and of four typical institutions I wish briefly to write. There are the On, Al-Azhar, National and Presbyterian Universities, which may be described respectively as heathen, pagan, religionless and Christian. The first belongs to the hoary past and has long ago closed its doors. The other three are open today—Al-Azhar being over a thousand years old, the Presbyterian College about two score and the National University two years old.

Seven miles west of Cairo on the wide and fertile plain of the Nile is the site where four thousand years ago stood the greatest university of ancient Egypt. Clover was blossoming there rather than learning, and instead of students eagerly devouring Astrology and other early Oriental pabulum, camels were lazily munching the new-mown hay. Here in the city of On (Gen. 41:45), or in the tongue of the Greeks, Heliopolis, was once one of the capitals of Egypt. Here stood in those far-away days a mighty university that largely molded Egypt, which in turn molded the thought of the world. Here stood a great temple to the Sun and here priests or professors, learned in all the knowledge of that day, devotees and propagandists of the worship of Rah sat as center of enquiring youths. In this clover field once astronomy, mathematics, geology, rhetoric and the tenets and rites of the Sun-God were taught. Here were mingled the wonders of that quaint lore, much of which is now lost, with an abominably material and animal heathenism. Here flourished a civilization according to the Sun-God (the god

who is the sun, not who made it) and here it lies buried beside the other relics of Rah. We had quite an interesting visit to these one-time sacred and learned precincts. The campus is level and, when we saw it, green with wheat or red with ripening clover. The old walls around the campus, though tumbled down, are clearly to be seen, forming a terrace which still encloses these once literary roods of earth. A single survivor of this hoary past towers above the trees. It is a granite obelisk, sixty-six feet high, ten feet square at the bottom and gradually tapering to the top, of one natural piece of stone, all four faces with hieroglyphics, said to extol its builders.

Many similar monuments adorned this campus once, but one by one they have been pillaged by conquerors or given away by generous Khedives till only one lonesome looking one remains to tell the tale. On this greensward romped, studied and grew into womanhood Asenath, the charming daughter of Prof. Potipherah. And in these classic precincts Joseph courted, won and wed the old professor's daughter. But the chief distinction this old university has is that it has among its alumni, one Moses. And tradition has it that he also was a professor here. He doubtless received all the learning to be gotten here, but was careful to get his religion from his nurse rather than his priestly professor. And Moses representing learning plus God, is alive and powerfully influential in the world today, while Rah and all Rahisms, great as they were in some respects, minus God, have long lain dead without the smallest legacy of influence and all but forgotten.

The most interesting sight in Cairo, if we except the Museum, was Al-Azhar, the great Moslem University. It is in old Cairo, or the old part of the city, and is equal in age to the city itself, dating from 973, A. D. Like On, Al-Azhar is a religious institution and for centuries has been the leading educational center not only of Egypt, but of the Mohammedan world with its many millions of souls.

Its first building was naturally a mosque. This has been added to, perhaps a score of times, without any idea of architectural design, and with the purpose only to make more room. These many and diverse apartments serve as dormitories, the students from each country or nationality being put into separate quarters. In these quarters the students live and study—they sleep without beds, sit down without chairs, cook without stoves and eat (at least those I saw) without knives and forks. Surrounded by these dormitories is a wide porch and an open court, containing an acre or more. This open space, I suppose one would call a study and recitation hall, and was swarming with students. Take an old-time school with fifty boys and girls studying aloud (as was the old custom) and multiply by one hundred, adding a few extra hundreds to make up for the Arabic, and you have an idea of what we saw and heard here. The young and old were here, the poor and the rich, and a dozen countries were represented. Some were reciting, others swaying their bodies to and fro were studying, a few were eating their lunch of a crust of bread and a dried fig, here and there would be a fellow asleep, and others were watching us with bulging eyes. A number of students are from Cairo and have families and businesses in the city, and come to the university at spare hours, which in the East are very many.

The Koran is the chief study, with Arabic, logic, rhetoric, geography, etc., as subsidiary studies. Teaching these latter branches is little more than a pretense, I was told; certainly in the accurate use of language, this could hardly be called a school, much less a university. It is worse than mediaeval, it is archaic, antediluvian.

It is the center of Moslem fanaticism and we were cautioned to be on our best behavior as we "infidel dogs" inspected these jabbering so-called students. Fanaticism implies superstition and ignorance—varmints not supposed to

be able to live in halls of learning—yet here side by side were ignorance and "learning," superstition and "religion."

A three to six years' course is given, the graduates being given a diploma which usually secures for them the nuiversally coveted government position.

This old university—perhaps the oldest in the world—has done enough harm, to have been retired long ago on a liberal pension of perdition, yet it is still doing a pretty lively business at the same old stand. But the beginning of what many hope is the end has set in. A few years ago there were over twelve thousand students, but under the combined influence of Western civilization, England's strong hand and Christian missions, the number has decreased several thousand and is still on the wane. Its a long ways to Egypt, but it would be well worth the trip if one could but have the honor of being best man at the funeral of senile old Al-Azhar and help lay him under the clover beside his unlamented predecessor, the University of On.

Fourth in point of chronology, but third in the ascending scale of truth is the National Egyptian University. It was organized as recently as December 1908, and as its name indicates, is fostered by the government. It occupies temporary quarters in an old palace, and with its blackboards, patent desks and other emblems of civilization, contrasted strikingly with its neighbor and rival we have just been speaking of. With less than two years of age, this new institution has over five hundred students. It is modeled after the best European universities, with, of course, local adaptation. Its plan is not to be on speaking terms with religion, avoiding in its courses and life, Moslemism on one hand and Christianity on the other. For this negative religious position, the friends and influence of Al-Azhar are bitterly opposing it and even predict its early downfall. With Christianity ruled out, it is far from pleasing to the straight-out Christian, yet they recognize the power of

truth, and hope that the history, science and philosophy of the Western learning taught there will help to remove the pall of superstition and to break up the despotism of fanaticism that now enslaves the land. Many rocks lie ahead of this infant institution. Some of these were plainly pointed out by ex-President Roosevelt in his speech within the walls of the university the day before our visit. Despite the most serious handicap—its religiouslessness—we can hope it is destined to be a potent factor in Egypt's redemption from darkness.

The fourth university is that of the American Mission. It is not in the full sense a university, though it comes nearer it than any of the three preceding. It was established by the United Presbyterian Church of "the States," and along uncompromising Christian lines has built up an institution of over five hundred students, and of most commanding influence. The collegiate department, which is up the Nile at Assiut, I did not see, though the primary department, Girls' College and Theological Seminary in Cairo I visited several times.

This splendid institution does the kind of work that is done in Davidson College and the College for Women in Charlotte. With no blowing of trumpets, without the eclat and magnitude of its contemporaries, toiling quietly and constantly, it has been and is a mighty leavening power among this unleavened people. It works out of sight from the center outward as all orthodox leaven does. And in the acknowledged crisis now impending in Egypt, under God, this Christian college will be a powerful ally in helping to effect the triumph of truth.

And in the future when pagan Al-Azhar will slumber with heathen On, and the young National University will have repented of its godlessness, let us hope; this great mission college, planted and sustained by devoted Christians of our own great nation, will continue on its beneficent way, till at

Photo by W. R. Minter, 1910

REMAINS OF ON—*Moses' Alma Mater.*

last Egypt, who has so long been cursed rather than blessed by her schools, shall come to learn that the God of the West has builded for her an institution which has reversed the old Egyptian order, and instead of being the long-accustomed curse, has proven a very benediction from heaven.

MISSIONS IN EGYPT.

The brightest spot in all Egypt is the mission work of the United Presbyterian Church of the United States. For three days, with a sigh of relief and a heart of gratitude, I turned from the votaries of Isis and Apis, and even Mahomet, to mingle and commune with the disciples of Jesus. I saw only the mission work in Cairo and not all of that. But what I saw in this part of this great work, together with what I saw in the hearts of these faithful workers and what I heard at their lips as to conditions in Egypt is far more than I can tell in this article. I admit frankly a sympathetic bias towards this enterprise before examination, but not a sympathy that would blind my eyes or warp my judgment.

Let me introduce the reader to a few of these missionaries. First, here is the happiest man in all the land of the Nile, and the best perhaps; a man with silver hair and beard, glistening eyes and beaming face, author, preacher, theological professor, and unofficial head of the whole Egyptian mission—Rev. Andrew Watson, D.D., for forty-nine years a missionary here. Next is Miss Ella O. Kyle, head of the College for Girls, and who is giving a training to hundreds of girls similar to that given by the College for Women in the Standard's home city. Miss Kyle's is a life worth while. Go down into a poorer section of Cairo (and poorer means filthier, too), back into a side street and turn into a narrow alley, and here is a frail little woman past sixty, alone so far as Americans are concerned, and in tidily kept quarters, she, with her native helpers, conducts the Fowler Orphanage for girls. To meet her and see her work did me good. I want you to know her—Miss Margaret A. Smith.

Take time for one more, an athletic six-footer, graduate of Princeton (collegiate department) and Xenia, O., Seminary, virile and buoyant, who, with his cultured young wife, adds enthusiasm to wisdom in the station. They are Mr. and Mrs. McClenahan. There are eighty-four more. Let these four serve as samples.

And their work? Or through them and many who now sleep, God's work? It is the Synod of the Nile. It consists of the Presbyteries of the Delta, Middle Egypt, Assiut and Thebes, with eighty-eight foreign missionaries, ninety-one native preachers, 453 school teachers, 80 colporteurs and harum workers, 70 organized churches, with 10,341 members. As part of this work, the average Sunday morning congregations are 21,000; Sunday School pupils, 16,440; boarding and day school pupils, 17,900 (including Assiut College, with about twice as many students as Davidson), two hospitals, two mission boats, and $163,929 paid last year by the natives for church and school work. And besides these things, all those finer, subtler blessings of the gospel which defy tabulation in a statistical column. The figures above, any one may get from the mission's annual report (published in Philadelphia), but they mean far more when you have visited class-room after class-room, heard classes repeat chapter after chapter from the Bible, and others tell Bible stories better than many Presbyterian boys and girls in North Carolina can do, see the eagerness and neatness, and over it all the promise of God to bless and save. Another thing has taught me more than the figures in the printed report possibly could, alone—the background (I might truthfully say the black ground) of Mohammedanism. To paint a picture one must have a background. Against the fierceness and the darkness of the false prophet's paganism, the light of the gospel shines lustrously bright here. The number of self-supporting churches and others nearly so, was a surprise. In the matter of teaching the native church to support the gospel, these Psalm-singers are giving

some sound Presbyterian training. In fact, the work in the Sudan, far to the south, and which is really foreign work, is being done, principally by native preachers, educated in the college at Assiut and the Theological Seminary in Cairo. And this frontier work is supported in part by the mission churches in Egypt. Still another thing that heightened my admiration for the work of these patient toilers is the difficulty of the field. No mission fields are easy, and I have neither the desire nor the right to say that Mohammedan Egypt is harder than other fields, yet I do say, I can scarcely imagine how any field could be more difficult.

There are no other general missionary efforts in Egypt except this by the United Presbyterians. And here is not only a striking example of Christian comity, but also of the application of the soundest business principles. The Church of England is doing a splendid local work in Cairo, and a few other points; and the Scotch Presbyterians have a small church here. And I believe there are one or two other insignificant European missions here also. But the twelve million souls of this country have by common consent been left for that branch of the great Presbyterian family which is so bravely wrestling with the problem. A long and sad chapter might be written on the various corrupt forms of so-called Christianity found here—the Roman and Greek, the Armenian and Coptic churches, most of whom have not only embittered the Moslem against Christianity by corruption of doctrine and practices, but themselves have need of missionaries being sent to them. All of which adds to the complexity and difficulty of conquering Egypt for Christ. One Protestant in every thousand souls may seem slow progress for 51 years of preaching, and reason for discouragement. But not so. It is a magnificent beginning, and these few thousands who form the first fruits are a demonstration that in time and by the Spirit of God the

others, too, may be won. And over and above all considerations of splendid equipment, judicious methods and faithful missionaries, to effect this national consummation, is the Word of God, "Egypt shall know the Lord," and the wider prophesy, "All nations shall serve Him."

THREE WEEKS IN PALESTINE.

It was early morning, April the fourth, when we first espied the land so long a dream but so soon to become a reality. Jaffa, (Joppa of the Bible), perched on the side of the hills and lining the shore was quaint and beautiful in the distance, but the latter part of this impression was soon to be dissipated. I never played foot-ball before that morning but we had a fine match game (our baggage and ourselves being the ball). Rival boatmen clambered up and swarmed over our boat, pushing, screeching, dragging suit cases and bundles, running over anything or anybody, while we looked on in amazement, pushed and all but fought. We were mad one minute and in the next would be forced to laugh at the ludicrousness of the whole performance. But, to mix figures a little, we made a touch-down, as we stepped ashore with necks unbroken and baggage unstolen.

I think those who essay to read the few letters I hope to send the Standard, would like a little introduction to our party. There are thirty-four of them—fifteen men and nineteen ladies. Of the men, five are ministers, two editors, three youths, with a banker, a broker, a lumber-dealer, a real estate man and an undertaker. Of the ladies, six are widows, five are wives and eight single. Among the ladies are two mission workers and one trained nurse. There are two Methodists, five Episcopalians, five Presbyterians and twenty-two Baptists, which rather looks like watered stock. Two of our number are from Massachusetts, one from Illinois, two each from North Carolina and Tennessee, one each from South Carolina, Florida and Missouri, three from Alabama and twenty-two from Georgia. We have several styles of beauty, every kind of temperament together with quite an

assortment of tempers. While in the introducing act, let me present the other members of our caravan, humbler maybe and yet very important personages. Beside our conductor and dragoman, there are eight carriage-drivers, nine cooks and servants and twenty-one muleteers; and deserving of honorable mention, twenty-four carriage horses, sixteen riding horses, twelve donkeys and forty pack mules. With this aggregation, we have just finished a delightful three weeks' camping trip through a large part of Palestine. Our tents were usually pitched in olive groves beside some spring or stream and with comfortable cots, and tempting fare, the trip was well-nigh ideal. From Jaffa we went by train through the beautiful fertile plain of Sharon up the rocky Judean mountains, to Jerusalem, a distance of fifty-seven miles. Here our tents were in readiness for us, pitched in the new Jerusalem, as our dragoman expressed it, a short distance north of the old city. Under these olive trees we lived for ten days while visiting the many spots in and close about David's ancient city. From here we had a hard day's journey to Hebron and back, twenty-two miles to the south, and a still more interesting trip down to Jericho, the Jordan River and the Dead Sea, twenty-five miles to the east. Only one point of the compass remained to us, so breaking camp, we turned to the north. Passing in plain view of Mizpeh, Nob, Bethel and other places which live in our Bibles we pitched our tent just outside a wretched Moslem village in a beautiful little valley. This town like all the other native villages is a series of mud huts, all built together, and not unlike a prosperous dirtdauber village on an enlarged scale. Upon our arrival we were the cynosure of all eyes. Scores of the more timid looked at us from the flat roofs of their humble homes, while hundreds swarmed about our tents. The custom is for camping parties to put themselves under the protection of the sheik of the village, who, for a consideration,

of course, furnishes guards for the night. These supposed protectors are said often to be the worst kind of thieves, but in our party not one article was stolen during the three weeks. That night our horses, tied to the ropes for lack of a tree or bush, would get tangled in the ropes and kick and pitch at intervals, the asses brayed in relays all night, and it seemed that a hundred lusty-lunged dogs in the near-by village howled back a response in Arabic. And some slept some and others slept none. But all soon learned, and these sounds, that at first drove away sleep, after one or two nights, lulled us to slumber. Indeed some feared they would be unable to go to sleep after camp-breaking without our canine and asinine lullabies. But one night we had our revenge. For two hours or more with songs, and such games as blindfold and "Going to Jerusalem," accompanied by many shouts and much laughter we made so much racket that the villagers' hearts must have quaked, and they seemed to think that if we fought like we hollowed it was prudent to lie low till the American Beduoins moved on.

But to resume: Our second night from Jerusalem was just outside the prosperous city of Nablus (Shechem of Bible) in the narrow valley between Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim. Here we spent Sunday also, which was a day of physical rest and scriptural delight. Three days' journey northwesterly, down winding valleys, covered with wheat and walled in by mountains, we wound our way past the disappearing hills and across Sharon's plain of herds and harvests till we reached the southwestern slope of Mt. Carmel, on the Mediterranean Sea. Here is Haifa, a busy, half-native and half-German seaport of 25,000 people. Our tents were pitched in a vacant lot of the city, very much after the fashion of a circus in North Carolina. We were back on the seashore forty miles north of where we landed at Jaffa. Now turning east or northeast a good day's drive took us through the Plain of Acre north of Carmel's long high backbone, out of Samaria, up, up the hills and mountains of Gallilee to

Nazareth. The view here, the holy sites and the missions, I shall speak of later. I wish only to give now our route, and any introductory fragments that may get in the way. From Nazareth it rained on us to the Sea of Galilee, where on April 22nd our last camp was pitched. Some of us braved the drizzling rain for a row over these waters that heard so much of our Saviour's teaching, saw so much of His works and learned more than once the superiority of His strange power.

All were astir at 5:00 o'clock the next morning, and after good-byes to our always courteous and efficient camp-servants we embarked in small boats to cross the sea and take the train at the extreme end of the lake. Camp life had been thoroughly enjoyed, but we were ready for a change, and with a last look at blue Galilee and the mountains of Canaan to the west we welcomed the sight of a sure-enough train clipping across the Jordan valley towards us. A wild climb up the mountains of Gilead, lunch on the wide extended plain of Hauran and a good dinner in our comfortable hotel on the banks of the Abana in Damascus, city of lousy dogs and ancient years, brought to a close a full day. We are now out of Palestine, though I hope in the few following letters to go again with as many as desire, over this wonderful land of Israel.

The undue haste at modernization of which I had read, I failed to find. Change there is, but two railways, a few miles in length, a spendidly built macadam road in several directions out of Jerusalem, and a few other signs of the 20th century, have failed to hustle the East. Much less are the natural aspects changing. Above all others, the fact that most impressed me in nature was the treelessness of the land. Excepting fruit trees, a few scrubby oaks on the slopes of Mt. Carmel and adjacent hills, and a few lonesome cypress and sycamore tree, I did not see any trees in all the land. This, however beautiful the landscape, gives monotony, at least to one accustomed to the alternating fields and forests of North Carolina. Next to the absence of forests is the presence of rocks. Rocks, rocks, everywhere! According to the story of my childhood, here certainly is where the devil's apron-strings broke and he spilled his rocks. Houses are of stone, and so are fences and bridges and terraces. The hills and mountains, denuded of trees have by the rain of centuries also been robbed of most of their soil, so that millions of boulders and acres of rocks, great and small, frown at you as you pass. A little remnant of soil remains, packed into crevices or hiding behind a friendly stone and protected by an army of flowers arrayed against the flood in defence of its meagre measure of earth. I have counted a score of rock terraces, each from three to ten feet high, up a single mountain side, marking where in the days of Israel's glory were fruitful vineyards and contented homes, but now a desolation whose broken walls write plainly against the mountain side—Ichabod.

Speaking only of the natural world, the next most strik-

ing thing is flowers. I didn't know there were so many flowers in the world; many in kind and very, very, many in number; mountains of flowers, valleys and plains of flowers; flowers everywhere in tangled masses, except the fields of grain, and even here in lesser numbers they smiled at us from the ripening wheat. The white and pink Roses of Sharon, the lilies of the field, and of the valley, with the red, white and pink clover, the scarlet poppy, white and yellow daisies, anemonies, oleanders, and even the thistle, with its blossom of blue, and a host of others, make this the paradise of wild flowers.

Accustomed to our streams and springs and wells in the homeland, the scarcity and therefore the value of water in this land much impressed me. Streams that flow all the year are few, while rocky beds where only winter torrents rush are numerous. The scarcity of springs makes the crowds about them, both of men and beasts, the larger, and with no sense of safeguarding the water, the danger of contamination is great. For instance, a village of hundreds, with thousands of sheep and goats, usually has not more than one well or fountain. An hour or more before lunch one day, we passed several mothers standing in a creek, giving their little naked children a good scrubbing. We drank at lunch a few miles further down out of that stream, and probably the bath water of those little rascals we saw up the creek. You say you wouldn't have drunk it, but you don't know. Scarce as water is, though, in comparison with countries contiguous, such as thirsty Egypt, lined on both sides with deserts, or Arabia or Persia, with their waterless wastes, this land is abundantly supplied with water. Yet compared with North Carolina, this is a dry and thirsty land. At any rate, Isaiah's invitation, "Ho, every one that thirsteth," and the Saviour's presentation of Himself to the woman of Samaria as the "Water of Life," have in the light of the local coloring, a fresh and vivid meaning.

Every traveller here no doubt compares the real Palestine

before his eyes with the land as pictured from his readings. And perhaps all have in the presence of the actual to amend the picture they had imagined. I know I did. The Plains of Sharon and Jezreel are both far more fertile and more beautiful than I had thought; there are more and higher mountains with scenery more rugged and grand than I had fancied. If disappointed in some detail, my heart instead of being disillusioned by the proximity of view, has rather been amazed at the wonders, beauties and revelations of the land, despite the degree to which it is in ruins and to which sinful man still rudely interrupts the vision.

The climate during April was very much like the climate of Asheville in that month. Winter clothes had been comfortable and overcoats in constant use, save in the middle of the day. In view from the high points of nearly all Palestine, is snow-crowned Hermon, while at Jericho and Jaffa, Haifa and elsewhere, were oranges, bananas and lemons growing in luxuriance. Between these frigid and tropical extremes is possible every zone of vegetation. Small, therefore, as it is, this land in its vegetation zones is world-wide.

Wheat and olives seem the two most valuable crops. Clover, figs and grapes come next in importance, I should judge, and after these, oranges, vegetables and almonds.

But as in the time of Abraham, so now, this is a pastoral country. Its chief wealth today is its flocks and herds. We have seen hundreds of shepherds leading and watching their flocks, calling to them, carrying the sick and lame, and closing them in the fold at night. In addition to sheep and goats are cattle and donkeys and camels in profusion, horses in fewer numbers, but not so much as one shoat in all the landscape. It wouldn't have been healthy for him if he had been, for, for over a month we had eaten mutton, mutton, and things fried in olive oil, till we could hardly stand to talk about unprocurable ham or bacon, or good old North Carolina lard-shortening.

As carriages are yet new institutions in this country, roads

are new. The old roads being bridle paths over the mountains and down the valleys and for our wagons and box cars sufficed the backs of the donkeys and camels respectively. Even with some splendid roads, wagons are rarely seen. What's the use of buying a wagon and harness in addition to the donkey so long as the donkey has a ready-for-use back, they would argue? And as a clincher, they would add, "Besides, our fathers had no wagons." We are disposed to smile at their slowness, yet we may smile too soon. May not their way be best and cheapest for them? Donkeys and camels are cheap and can carry incredible loads. So they are loaded up, and in case of the donkeys, one man walks and drives a small drove of them, laden with merchandise. In case of the camels, when laden, they are lined up tandem, coupled together with a rope, almost freight-train style, and with one man as engineer, conductor and flagman, the camel train moves out. So there you are. I repeat, we musn't laugh at these people too soon.

From Jerusalem to Nablus, a road superior in some respects to any thing even in boastful Mecklenburg county, has been built in the last few years. The method of its construction was truly oriental. No speeches or election bonds or other civilized foolishness; the Sultan just decided it would be nice to have such a road, so he sent an engineer to make the survey, and then ordered the people along the way to build it. And they did, without one cent of cost to the government. This incident is typical of Turkey's beneficent rule in this country! Take another: Taxes are collected today very much as Matthew and his fellow publicans did in the time of our Saviour. The Constantinople authorities, as I have been informed, and I think reliably, will send each year to the Governor of Jerusalem, "Your district must pay so much this year." He has to raise and forward that and all the rest he keeps. The village sheik is assessed by the Governor so much. This he must collect in ways as seems best to him; all over the stipulated amount being his

pay for his trouble. This, so long as human nature is the grand rascal it is, is not exactly an ideal system of taxation.

Yet these are the same people who still so carefully observe the old Mosaic injunction, "Cursed be he that removeth his neighbor's land mark," that they have no deeds to their lands and rarely or never have a dispute as to ownership or boundary lines! The new constitutional government provides for land deeds to be taken out, though but few in Palestine have yet availed themselves of this privilege.

Turkey's government has long been a plague-spot in point of law and justice. Life and property are very insecure. The window beside which I am writing these words has a net work of iron bars as secure as the jail in Lincolnton. Yet I am not in jai, but in my comforable room of my Damascus hotel. Many or most dwellings all over Palestine, except the native huts, have barred windows. Every shepherd or donkey and camel driver in charge of merchandise is armed with shot guns, rifles, pistols, dirks or long handled hatches, and often with several of the aforesaid. These are the visible implements of war; how many disappearing batteries they may have under their long outer garments, I had no curiosity to investigate.

In line with these travelling arsenals, is the fact that I didn't see a farm house or cottage in all Palestine out by itself, such, for instance, as dots every landscape in our happy land. The reason given me is that they are afraid. They live huddled up by hundreds in these villages of solid dwellings, with only a few narrow, crooked alleys through them, for mutual protection. Perhaps the thought of a happy little home apart from all their neighbors has never occurred to them. But if they escape the marauding Bedouin, they do not escape the fleas and tuberculosis, as the chickens, donkeys and people occupy in many instances the same bed chamber. I inspected one such home, being attracted by seeing the chickens going in the hut to roost,

though before the iuspection was completed, the lady of the house drove us out with quite an assortment of fiery Arabic faces, gestures and anathemas.

But speaking of diseases, so far as I can learn, such luxuries as grip, appendicitis, pellagra, etc., are unknown, and among the Beduoins, who live in tents, consumption is practically unknown. Malarial and typhoid fever, diarrhoea and rheumatism are the most prevalent diseases. To this should be added sore eyes, producing very often blindness and caused by a combination of unprotected glare of the sun, together with too great economy in the use of soap. We saw a few lepers, but the number affected by this disease is comparatively small.

Drinking intoxicating liquors is a negligible quantity, thanks to the positive prohibition of the Koran. But every man is an inveterate smoker of the cigarette.

But my time and your patience are already overtaxed. What shall we say to all these things? Did not God threaten with a curse not only the children of Israel, but also their land? Israel sinned in rejecting the law through their blind corruptions and wilful disobedience, and then in rejecting the Fulfiller of the law. And no one needs to be told how terribly the threatened curse has fallen on them. But the land? Archaeologists dig up and read the inscriptions of the ancients and so bring to light facts important and tragic. God's hieroglyphics are written all over this unhappy land. Jericho, Jerusalem, Capernaum, with their ruins, the broken terraces on a thousand hills, the wasted sites of former plenty, spell out, it seems to me, the fulfillment of God's curse. In letters bold and awful, God's handwriting is over this once goodly land, and the interpretation is, "I, Jehovah, spake the blessings and the curses from Gerizim and Ebal—and I meant it."

But with our God is compassion. Should not we more earnestly pray than perhaps we have, that God would turn

unto Him that wandering people whose fathers wrote for us our Bible, and that He would overthrow the false prophet of this land, and sin, and bring under His benign sway Canaan and its Christless people, and make to smile a land long used to tears, restore true worship and service of Him on these hills and hasten the coming of that Holy One who came once before, and who comes but once again; but for that once, thank God!

JEWS' WAILING PLACE—*Jerusalem.*

Photo by E. E. Folk, 1910

JERUSALEM OF 1910.

All tourists to Palestine go for the sake of the past, yet they cannot shut their eyes to the present. Indeed, there is at least one sense in which Jerusalem of today is more interesting than the Jerusalem of Solomon, and in this same sense one of the thousand living sore-eyed urchins on its streets exceeds in interest some dead prophet in his tomb. For the present let us look at this ancient city in its modern garb and at a later time we shall visit the holy places.

The Jerusalem we saw is a lineal descendant of the City of David—or to go further back, of Ornan's threshing floor —from either of which it is removed eight municipal generations. These eight forefathers (for that many times the city has been destroyed and buried) are entombed one upon another and on their sepulchers lives the rather unworthy scion of this royal line.

Jerusalem is the terminus of a short railway to Jaffa on the coast. This little road would be accounted in America very poor transportation facilities for a city of 100,000; yet it must be a vast advance over none at all, and is certainly a boon to travelers. The station is a mile southwest of the city proper, though around the station is a large and flourishing settlement of Germans. The number of hacks at the station and their solicitation of your patronage was thoroughly up-to-date. So also was the splendid road with its bridge of enduring masonry over which we passed to the city.

There are really two Jerusalems; one the densely populated area within the old walls where the Jews largely predominate, the other outside these walls, where to the west and north is a growing city of modern houses and streets.

Here are the hotels, the European shops, the homes of various national and religious colonies, dotted here and there with churches, schools and hospitals.

The wall separating the old from the new Jerusalem is intact, and while all but the foundations were built in the sixteenth century, it must give a fair idea of just how this walled in city looked in the time of Christ and even of Solomon. The height of this wall varies from thirty to seventy feet, and it is from ten to fifteen feet thick, while at intervals stand sentinal towers. On all four sides of the city are gates, six of which are open and five closed. The streets are not golden, but of the earth—very earthy—crooked, narrow, dark and filthy. David street, the principal business thoroughfare, is from ten to fourteen feet wide, and, like many others, covered over much of the way, and so really an arcade. It ascends Mt. Zion and much of the way is a long series of steps. These steps exclude all vehicles, though the donkey and camel with their large packs keep you dodging out of their way. The great majority of the streets of Jerusalem, because of narrowness, crookedness, or steepness, or all of these combined, never see buggy or wagon. On those that are used by carriages, they can pass each other only at certain wide places or at crossings. Tourists' carriages were the only vehicles I recall seeing within these walls. And sidewalks! Usually sidewalk, gutter and street are one. A very few streets had what we understand as a sidewalk, varying in width from one inch up to four or five feet, then disappearing for a block, only to appear further on at any angle and uncertain width.

The people who daily walk these devious ways to their humble tasks are 52,000 Jews, 30,000 Mohammedans, and 20,000 Christians of various sects. The different religionists occupy, generally speaking, different sections of the city. The Southwest Ward, to use a familiar term, is the Armenian quarter; the Northwest, centering about the

Church of Holy Sepulcher, the quarters of the Latins and Greeks, while the Moslems live in the Northeast, with the Jews in the Southeast Ward.

The population in the modern city without these fortress-like walls is a conglomerate of races and religions, though the Russions and Germans seem to predominate. Religiously speaking, here the Greek Catholics are most numerous, while from a financial classification, the well-to-do, as opposed to the poor in the congested old city, have their homes in this section. Still again the modern, twentieth century man lives here as opposed to the native mediaeval man behind the walls.

When to these different peoples you add an even greater variety of "pilgrims," both Moslem and Christian, from all over the world, you have a medley of races, religions, languages, costumes and colors, that can be matched perhaps nowhere else in the world. At all the "holy places" and up and down Damascus and David streets, these curious peoples jostle each other. Speaking of these two streets reminds me of the shops or stores. They are dark, dirty and small, averaging, I would say, from one-half to two-thirds the size of a North Carolina sitting room. The shoe shop keepers make shoes while the customer is coming; the baker sells his bread and other uninviting edibles hot from the charcoal fire. You don't go in, because you can't get in easily; that is unless the proprietor comes out to make room. Besides there is no use, as by stepping to the door you are in sight and almost in reach of any article for sale. The sight of an American department store would give these merchants the blind staggers.

This glimpse at the native business life of these people will convince one that they do not belong to our century nor to the over-commercialized west. There is no doubt about things being hand made here. Not only is there the fewest possible tools in use, but the motive power is neither electric, steam nor horse, but crude human brawn. I no-

ticed, for instance, a man making some beautiful bannisters. With one hand, by a simple yet ingenious device, similar to a violin bow, he turned very rapidly the piece of wood, the other hand held one end of the chisel, while his toes gripped the lower end of the chisel and held it true to the wood. And the work was both neat and expeditious, and the humble workman was all unconscious that he was doing what probably no fellow-craftsman in America could do. And so long as men are cheaper than machines, this primitive condition is likely to continue, not only in Jerusalem, but in many other places in the East.

But Jerusalem is as interesting from a civic standpoint as from an industrial. It has a few lonely street lamps, no telephones, no water or sewerage beyond what Solomon had. It may not be nearly so good. But what it lacks in this line, it makes up in post offices. It boasts of five—Turkish, French, German,, Austrian and Italian, each being conducted and owned by the nation indicated in the name. In the days when there was only a Turkish post office, the enterprising postal clerks would soak the stamps off the letter, destroy the latter and sell again the former the next day to another man for another letter, and so on till he would tire of the soaking business. France, Austria, Germany and Italy didn't like such postal practices, so they demanded the right to establish post offices of their own. And not only at Jerusalem, but at Jaffa, Beirut and elsewhere, this strange condition exists.

Jerusalem is rich in Sundays, too. The Moslems observe Friday, the Jews Saturday, the Christians Sunday. As a matter of fact the Jew easily leads the other two sects in observing the day, at least in point of outward form. In the shuffle between these rival days of rest and worship, very, very many (among whom are not a few tourists from Christian lands) compromise the matter (and themselves, too) by observing none.

When it comes to mission schools and other forms of

philanthropy, few cities of its size can surpass it. The Greeks, Latins, Lutherans, Church of England, as well as philanthropic Jews, have a generous share in works of this character. These schools have also stirred the usually indifferent Turkish authorities to establish government schools for both girls and boys. For the lack of competent native teachers, the instruction in these schools is given largely by European teachers. The need of these schools, both mission and state, will be better realized when we know that this city of 100,000 people has only one newspaper, that an Arabic weekly, consisting of two pages about the size of those of the Presbyterian Standard, printed on one side only.

And that reminds me of the languages here. Every European language may be heard any day in the course of an hour's stroll about the streets. The native tongue—Arabic —comes first, of course. Then comes Turkish, French and English in importance. In Egypt, English, as a language, has outstripped French and is very close behind it in Palestine. Here, as doubtless it is in all Europe, no one can get along successfully with only one language. I was informed that the telephone girls in Cairo had to speak four languages, and most of our carriage drivers in Jerusalem, besides Arabic, could make a pretty good pass at English, French and German. It was surprising and interesting to see how much they, the souvenir venders and others, could express with a vocabulary of from thirty to fifty English words.

But French money is better understood and more popular than the French language. Most tourists use it rather than the less simple English or the more unintelligible Turkish currency.

In fine, the Jerusalem we saw was interesting as an antique, and because it is so truly oriental and therefore so thoroughly different from the cities of the West. Yet it was sad to see this patriarch among cities, which even after

all her tragic history, seems not yet to have learned what are the unfailing wages of sin. But it was hopeful and comforting to find signs of a better day. Human agencies are at work which cannot fail of blessing, indeed, which are blessing now, but more than this, God's promise which standeth sure and steadfast, that the age-long conflict between sin and holiness has no uncertain issue. The star of hope that will lead out of its sorrowful plight this sinning city is God Jehovah, the Lord of might. Nothing short of God can paint rosy, Jerusalem's tomorrow.

HOLY PLACES IN PALESTINE.

Palestine as a whole has been hallowed by the words and works of patriarchs and prophets, of apostles and by that One who called and commissioned them. Then there are many local spots which are distinguished because this or that incident of scripture took place there. The effort to locate too many such places has, as one would expect, brought about much difference of opinion. The spirit of long ago, as voiced by the woman of Samaria, when she said to Christ, "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship," is still alive. For all over Palestine are rival chapels and churches, each claiming to be the exact spot of some scriptural incident. For instance, the Romans have their Garden of Gethsemane walled in and in the midst of the garden a beautiful gilt-doomed chapel; while hard by, also walled in, is to the Greeks, where our Saviour bore alone the agony. In Cana, both the above bodies have churches that mark the exact spot where that simple marriage that had Jesus as a guest, took place. In Nazareth we were shown a church the Greek Catholics have built where Joseph and Mary, with their wonderful child, lived. Nearly half a mile distant is a Roman Catholic church and monastery, which cover, themselves being witness, the boyhood home of Jesus, while deep down in the rock is the kitchen of Mary, and a stone's throw distant, the site of Joseph's workshop! At places that admit of no rivalry, usually one or the other of these two churches have preempted them and marked them with a chapel, monastery or hospice for pilgrims. In this way, Bethany, the Mount of

Olives, Jacob's Well and other places are owned by the Greek church, while Capernaum, Mt. Carmel and other places are in the Romans' hands.

Again some places are owned jointly by both these sects, while wall to wall stand their rival chapels. In a series of rock caves in Bethlehem is the place generally accepted as being the place where Jesus was born. From this grotto, are two stairways of stone, the one to the south leading into the Greek church, with all its accessory quarters, while the steps leading to the north bring you into the church of her ecclesiastical rival—the Roman. In the dark, narrow hallway, within ten feet of the manger stands an armed infidel soldier of Turkey to keep the followers of the Prince of Peace from fighting each other! But the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem is the head of all such affronting. It covers the traditional site of Christ's crucifixion and burial, and is accepted as such by all Christian sects except Protestants. The majority of Protestants and the weight of testimony, so far as I have had time to gather, favor a site outside the present wall, not far from the Damascus gate, as being the place where our Lord was crucified and buried. But we cannot go into this. In the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the so-called site of Calvary and the grave of Christ, belong in common to all sects. After that, the many chapels, niches, are divided up among various creeds for their exclusive use. The Romans, Greeks, Armenians, Syrians and Copts have one or more chapels each. The Protestants, to their credit, have no part in these unseemly and bitter jealousies. The score or more of sacred events that are claimed to have taken place in the space covered by this church is enough to prove the whole claim a pious fraud. They show the stone of unction, the exact spot from which Mary viewed the crucifixion, the graves of Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, of Melchisedec and Adam, chapels of the Apparition, of the Footprints of Stocks, of the Parting of Christ's Raiment, of

Egyptian Mary, of the Archangel Michael, and others, with many other wonders, not least being the center of the world. Adam's grave, they claim, was discovered in the following miraculous manner: A drop of blood from the dying Saviour as he hung on the cross a few steps distant, fell on the ground, and Adam's head came out of its hitherto unknown grave in that spot! For some reason, sufficient to the ignorant and superstitious mind of the Greek churchman, this grave marks the center of the earth and they show to all an iron post stuck in the ground at this important spot.

For possession of this Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the Crusaders fought over two hundred years, and paid in their vain effort to rescue it permanently from infidel hands, perhaps ten million lives. In modern times, back of politics, I am told, the Crimean war was, as much as anything else, a contest for possession of the key to this church.

But most thronging with holy memories is Moriah's height, where Abraham, and for a thousand years, Israel, and as many as believe, have by faith offered their sacrifice unto God. As your readers know, the whole temple area is in the hand of the Moslem, and I confess I am glad it is. At least, this is preferable to a duplication of the scenes about the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Over the rock of Moriah's dome is the Mosque of Omar, with its exquisite design and faultless execution, and to the south of these spacious grounds is the Mosque of El Aksa. In the temple area we best found seclusion from the curious crowds, and in this spiritual capital of God's ancient people we lingered as a vision of its courts, crowded with expectant Israel, peopled these vacant grounds. And as the smoke and incense mingled before our fancy, as it ascended, we all but heard God's voice, and saw the shining from the Holy Place of His old-time glory.

Another series of places is shown the tourist, as being where, according to tradition, this or that biblical event

took place. The credulous believe, while the judicial, without denying, refuse to believe. Still other differences of opinion as to location of some places, as Calvary, Capernaum, Sodom, etc., have arisen among scholars and archaeologists; often evidence and authorities being divided.

These are some of the difficulties that await every traveler, eager to meet the heroic spirits in the places where they wrought, and to catch somewhat of their inspiration for these new times. The incongruity in many places between the magnificence which misguided man has placed and the simplicity demanded by the event, not only interrupts the craved vision, but is apt to tempt to righteous indignation, and I fear may be, indignation which is not altogether righteous.

It is not without both a mental and spiritual effort that these hindrances are turned into stepping stones, over which we climb to audience with prophet and apostle. The purely traditional and unimportant we dismissed in a moment. The fine points of the archaeologist we passed by for the most part. The strife between sects over places whose identification is acknowledged by all, we tried to overlook. And we had left ,and left most surely—what? Several places positively located, Jerusalem, with its undoubted wonderful environs, the winding ways over the mountains to Samaria, and Galilee, with its sea of blue, all covered by the loving ministry of the Saviour. These and far more than we can here tell, are enough to refresh any heart and pay with a measure that is pressed down and running over the voyager for his long quest.

It is but frank to say that as in new-made America, so even in Bethany or Gethsemane of Palestine, God speaks only to the believing and hungry soul. Without faith it is impossible to please Him, even though one stand under Calvary's shadow; or to see Him without some holiness of heart. No magic power dwells in the dumb witnesses of

miracles to cover our sins and bring us Christ. They are only a help, a subordinate help, too, yet one which is a privilege to have and for which for a life-time to be grateful.

There is danger, perhaps, of allowing one's mind to run to useless reverie and even to enervating sentimentalism, as he traces with eye and foot the pathways of prophets and Saviour; lest after the mist of the transient emotion has vanished, he is either no better or the worse for the vision that would not tarry. But on the other hand, is there not need in many of our lives, not for sickly sentimentalism, but for strong, manly, Christly emotion? Emotion not isolated from truth and duty, but fed by the fuel of holy facts, and guided in soberness of judgment; an emotion that is unashamed to love strongly and sincerely, and an emotion that pricks on, a none too willing will, to choose, to act, and to lead?

Some of the heart's inner life had best not be committed to ink, yet a few words of spiritual impression that came to some of us while in these holy places, I wish briefly to add.

First of all, the new reality of the actors and their acts, as I stood on their now deserted stage. Christ's and Peter's sermons had an unknown concreteness as I stood in the pulpit from which they were delivered. Seeing the oriental life and temper, with the identical landscape before the eyes, one, for instance, of the sweetest pictures in all Christ's varied ministry of love, described in the hymn, "At even, ere the sun was set, the sick around thee lay," had even an added charm. Yes, I say, it helped to make more vivid a Christ who to our material selves is none too near and real. In every place, but especially in these historic spots, one should feel the throb of God's great love. Here love patiently wrought out what in eternity it had decreed. And such love in the face of such undesert and such ingratitude! Are those yonder not tombs of prophets who for the sake of bearing God's loving message of warning, were slain? Here, the husbandmen beat and stoned the

servants of the master of the vineyard. And when at last the only Son was sent, they said, "Come, here is the Son, let us kill him." And they did, and yonder is the place. If there is anything in the association of ideas, then Palestine speaks loudly yet tenderly of God's love. Who has not, when visiting the grave of one loved and lost awhile, given love's tribute of a tear, as silently memory brings in review the affection that once throbbed for you in the precious dust at your feet? Then in Bethlehem and Gethsemane, Golgotha and Olivet, shall we, can we, withhold the tear of gratitude in remembrance of such amazing love here poured forth. And sin never seemed more dark and sinful than when I saw it silhouetted against the mountains of God's wonderful love and of Canaan.

When and where God did His best, Satan did his worst. The best point from which to seek to fathom to the nadir of sin, is in that land under the zenith of God's portrayal of true holiness. One more thought that must come to every traveler in this land, where before the fleshly eye even there stretches out place after place in which stand in long parallel rows the heroes of faith and the wrecks of unbelief. Here in the local coloring you can study from God's Word the full fruitage of faith and of unbelief, and hear the warning, fresh and strong against the latter, and the persuading voice tender, yet mighty, wooing us to the former. And in a land of tombs, from many of which there comes the unspoken story of a life-work unfinished or perhaps not begun, Jesus' words, "Work while it is day, for the night comes, when no man can work," are never so appropriate. If the words of Christ, "What thou doest, do quickly," to one bent on darkest sin, were in place, how much more to us, bent to holier purpose, I trust, come these same words. Unless quickly done, it is undone forever, and may be we, the non-doer, too!

But few, comparatively speaking, of God's children, come to these "holy places." And unquestionably they miss a

definite touch and help, which this setting of Bible history gives. Yet if denied this, the greatest and best help to know and grow like God is not denied. This is God's Word opened unto us by His Spirit, a heritage that is every one's for the asking and the using. And if there be differences of opinion or uncertainty as to the place where this or that event took place, or as to the time or the manner, let us be thankful there is no uncertainty as to the fact. And if we cannot know all, may we be wise to grasp the plain essentials, leaving to time and to God the unravelling of the uncertain and unnecessary details.

HIGH PLACES IN PALESTINE.

The geography of Palestine, though it looks as if it should be very easy to learn, has to me been hard to picture accurately and correctly. And since without being able to do this, one misses many a beautiful and practical light upon the Word of God, the study of the geography of this land is very important. There came to me as I went over this land, and I wish to suggest it to the younger readers, an easy and beautiful way to study Palestine. It is not by natural, tribal or political divisions. It is not to study a city or section chronologically, as its history is unwound in the Bible. But it is to take certain central places and as the eye sweeps the horizon to note every place in sight that may be connected with any part of the Bible history and so to this center, where you stand, relate and tie the surrounding sites. Such a system is neither logical nor exhaustive, yet as a side-study may be both pleasant and profitable.

Beginning at Jericho, we go to Jerusalem, and thence northward to Mt: Gerizim, Nazareth and the Sea of Galilee. Jericho is anything but a high place in point of altitude, being 1,300 feet below the level of the sea. But as a point of observation, though situated in the edge of the level and depressed Jordan Valley, the compass of the naked eye encloses a surprisingly large and interesting cluster of Scripture incidents. Standing on the ruins of the first Jericho, we see beneath our feet, uncovered by the recent German excavations, the foundations of the walls, deep down in the ground, that tumbled down at the blast of the rams' horns. This city is utterly a ruin. A mile or two due south is the site of the Jericho of Christ's time, also in ruins, while a mile to your southeast is Jericho No. 3, a small

squalid Moslem village with, however, three or four modern hotels. At the southeast corner of Joshua's Jericho is a full-grown creek, bursting from the rock and supposed by many to be the fountain whose waters were healed by Elisha. The second Jericho referred to brings to mind our Saviour's interview with Bartimaeus and the two blind beggars, and also the conversion of Zaccheus, and his joyful hospitality to the new-found Messiah.

Between the city of Rahab and that of this converted publican is the road to Jerusalem, winding steeply up the Kelt valley to the west, while far to the south, just west of the Dead Sea, looms up the sterile mountains of the Wilderness of Judea. Directly between you and the Dead Sea, and perhaps a little to the left, are, in the opinion of many, the sites of Sodom and Gomorrah, whose ruins even are lost to man's knowledge. Turn in your tracks forty-five degrees, and across the Jordan plain or valley (15 miles wide) to the left of the Dead Sea, you see like a mighty rampart of blue, the Mountains of Moab. About half-way up stood Herod's castle of Machaerus, where John the Baptist paid his head for his soul. And farther and higher, on the summit, from where must be an unsurpassed panorama of Canaan, lie Mt. Pisgah and Nebo. Looking now due east two miles towards the Jordan is Gilgal, with its memorial stones, the first capital of Israel's worship and in later times the site of one of the schools of the prophets. Several miles beyond here is the Jordan, and somewhere nearby the scene of Christ's baptism. It can't be far to the place where twice a dry passage way through the Jordan was made by God—first for the home-coming of the long-time wanderers, and then for the exit of the aged Elijah from Canaan on his way to meet God's chariot. The blue mountains up which he climbed to meet God are in plain view, and down these same mountains to the Jordan, maybe by the same way, slowly wound the three million children of Jacob, weary and home-sick. If from our view-point in

Jericho we turn towards the west, within a mile or two rises a steep mountain, perhaps two thousand feet high. This is the traditional Mount of Temptation. So is completed the circuit of vision from our first "High Place."

The most interesting high place is our second, Jerusalem, or more exactly, the top of the Mount of Olives. It is high in altitude as well as commanding a panarama of magnificent sweep. The wilderness of Judea, the Dead Sea, the Valley of the Jordan and beyond these the towering mountain plateau of Moab can be distinctly seen in the east. Facing the south, the nearest place of interest to be seen, is, almost hidden behind the brow of the mount itself, that loved retreat of Jesus from the tumult and unbeleif of Jerusalem—Bethany. Five miles farther south, but out of sight by reason of an intervening hill, is Bethlehem, with its manger, flanked on the east by the field where very probably Ruth gleaned and the startled shepherds heard first the angels' announcement of the glad tidings.

Southwest from where we stand on Olivet, and about two miles away, in a deep ravine, meet the valleys of the Kedron and of Hinnom, and beyond their junction the Hill of Evil Counsel, where, according to tradition, Judas hanged himself. But the western view from our high place! Who can enumerate, much less describe, the capital events that crowd the landscape? Below us, between us and the Kedron, is Gethsemane. Up this brook's western hill winds the road our Lord went and came to and from Bethany; and the way he went from Gethsemane, but not the way he came back to Olivet! And on the hill—Jerusalem! Nearest and most conspicuous is Mt. Moriah, with the thirty-five acres in the precincts of the temple. To the left and farther back is seen Mt. Zion, the home and throne of David and Solomon. Yonder in plain view, no matter which of the disputed sites is taken, is Calvary! But enough to say Jerusalem—let each for himself fill out the picture.

Photo by F. W. Patterson, 1910

"BY THE SEA OF GALILEE."

On a high mountain top, far to the northwest, yet distinctly visible, is Mizpeh, where Israel offered sacrifices and ratified the election of Saul as king, and also one of the points where Samuel judged Israel. To the north are the mountains of Benjamin, over which Christ and the Galileans came to and went from the Jewish feasts. Nor must we forget that on the mount on which we stand Jesus wept over the doomed city across the Kedron, and also from here he mounted up to his Mediatorial throne. From this high place, then, we can see the stage upon which was acted half and, (if one half can be more important than the other) the more important half of Bible history.

Forty miles north of Jerusalem, almost the center of Palestine, is another site with a commanding view of both landscape and history—Mt. Gerizim, our third high place. Some of our party climbed to its summit and were richly rewarded. The Jordan Valley and the mountains beyond were clearly seen in the east, the Great Sea in the far west, and snow-clad Hermon to the north. Across the narrow intervening valley, rising to the height of 3,076 feet, is its twin, Mt. Ebal, from which the curses were read, alternately with the blessings from Gerizim, to Israel in the valley between. Less than a mile west from this point, and in the same valley, is Shechem, the oldest sacred place in Palestine (Gen. 12:6), the capital of Jeroboam's kingdom and today, as in Christ's time, the center of the Samaritan faith. At the eastern base of Mt. Gerizim, Jacob's Well is seen, bringing to our mind that worthy patriarch and the wonderful interview between Christ and the woman of Samaria. On top of Gerizim are the ruins of the old Samaritan temple, where, according to the Samaritans, Abraham offered up Isaac and where in Christ's time they worshipped, and where once a year yet, the dwindling sect of less than 200 go and offer their blood sacrifices on the day of the Passover.

I had from my reading, which has been none too extended, no idea how beautiful is the place where Jesus grew in statue and in favor with God and man. If I had to name one most beautiful view in Palestine, that view would be—from Nazareth. The town, now become quite a city, is compactly built three-fourths up a mountain side, rising from the Plain of Jezreel. Its sole distinction is in being the home and the scene of the interrupted ministry of that one citizen whom it tried in vain to kill. Let us climb the other fourth way to the top of the towering peak beyond and above Nazareth, and from this high place, let us relate a few of the places and incidents before our eyes. In a valley several thousand feet below lies Cana and thence undulating plains, growing hills and mountains of Naphtali unto that hoary-headed sentinel in the north—Mt. Hermon. A little south of east is rounded Mt. Tabor, while farther east is the Plain of the Jordan and the mountains of Gilboa beyond. In a opposite direction over a hundred hillsides and mountain slopes, glistening in green as a late afternoon sun shone softly upon it, was the distant blue of the Great Sea, over whose waters sailed unwilling Jonah, and more than willing Paul. Jutting into this sea we saw the western point of Mt. Carmel, and tracing its even outline to its southeastern point, we saw afar the traditional place of the conflict between Elijah and the Prophets of Baal. But we have saved for the last the prospect southward. Here, shut in on all sides by mountains is a valley of triangular green and in the glory of that afternoon sun, a scene of surpassing beauty—the Plain of Jezreel or Esdraelon. The sides of this triangle are fifteen or twenty miles each and if it were possible, even fuller of historic interest than natural beauty. In this valley are Jezreel, Jenin, Shunem, and on the sides of Little Hermon, which forms the eastern side of the triangle, Nain and Endor. Across this plain, back and forth went Elijah, Ahab, with infamous Jez-

ebel, furious Jehu, scores of other Old Testament worthies, as well as the boy, youth and preacher, Jesus. Here, fertilizing the myriad flowers of this small area, blood has flown in a large stream nearly four thousand years long. For in this peaceful vale before our eyes, there locked in frightful mortal combat, Barak and Sisera, Gideon and Oreb and Zeeb, Josiah and Pharaoh, Romans and Jews, Crusaders and Saracens, and French (under Napoleon) and Turks! While on the edge of Gilboa's mountains, forming the southeast angle of this martial valley, Saul and Jonathan came to their unhappy end at the hands of inveterate Philistia.

From the viewpoint where we stood and enraptured looked, Jesus, familiar with every event and not unappreciative of the natural glory, looked and looked as he grew into maturity and when mature went forth to a battle far eclipsing all of these.

Our last high place is the Sea of Galilee. Like Jericho, it is high as a view-point, though far below the sea level. From our little fisherman boats in the midst of this heart-shaped blue, set in varying emerald of plain and mountain, let us take our last look at Canaan. Hermon, where perhaps our Lord was transfigured, looks down as usual upon us from its snowy north, while to the right of where the Jordan enters the Sea of Galilee is the site of Bethsaida, to the east Gergesa, and back of the steep mountains "the desert," while coming down with the eye the western shore are Chorazin, Bethsaida of Galilee, Capernaum, Magdala, each with some rich, if sad, story of the Messiah's ministry. Looking southwest through a deep gorge are the Horns of Hattin, where most agree, I believe, that Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount. But as if to cover all the land here with words of truth and deeds of love were not enough, he covered in like manner the waters about our boat, they proving a pavement, a pulpit and a power to be tamed. And

as if this busy life were not enough, here, after Calvary he fished with the disconsolate fishermen, partook with them of the fish-fry, that wondrous day-dawn and crowned this incident which to me for very exquisiteness stands almost apart, with His searching yet tender interview with Peter, and then—vanished!

But enough. I thought these brief views from these high places of nature and sacred history might help some in the homeland from their high place of spiritual privilege better to see and to serve our God the Most High.

MISSIONS IN PALESTINE.

Yes, in Palestine— in Hebron, the home of Abraham, in Bethlehem and Nazareth, and in the city where David sang and Christ died. Of all places where one would think missions would not be necessary these would be the last. Yet missions are here and the need is as strong as it is sad and even humiliating.

The religious situation here is as complex as it can well be, and the work of missions is correspondingly difficult. Palestine (by which I mean the section west of the Jordan) has been assumed by the Church of England as its field. And the Missionary Society of this church is doing a good work, mention of which will be made later on. Of Protestant bodies we find also work being conducted by the Christian and Missionary Alliance of "The States" and by the Lutheran Church of Germany. These churches are but the beginning of ecclesiastical complexity, not to say clashing. Strong, shrewd and aggressive on every high place is the Romanist and more numerous but less powerful is the Greek Church (largely Russian), with its priests of long hair and robes, but abbreviated education. Add to these, Armenians, Syrians and Copts, with their chapels and churches here and there, and then thousands of Jews, accepting one part (in form at least) of our Bible and rejecting the other, and the mixture becomes more mixed. To complicate still further is the omnipresent Moslem, professing greatly to revere Noah, Abraham and Christ, yet who is a prince among unbelieving fanatics; and to complete the picture of religious pandemonium, here are by the thousands the children of Abraham according to the flesh

(through Hagar) yet alas, poor wondering Bedouins, somebody else's children according to the spirit. Here is a religious conglomerate of the most incompatible parts—a condition conducive neither to spiritual peace nor progress.

As if that were not enough, the complexity and therefore the difficulty of mission work is still further increased by the presence of the many "holy places" It may sound strange, yet I believe it is true, that the fact that Christ was born in Bethlehem, coupled as it is with so much ceremonial trumpery, is a hindrance to the Bethlehemites receiving Him as Saviour! The Nazarenes today as of old are less ready to believe on the Carpenter's Son, because He lived there and because of the lives of some of His followers there. Jerusalem, by being the capital of Israel, brings together such crowds of pilgrims and fanatics and has been the scene of such unseemly, even fatal clashes between the misguided or supposed followers of Christ, that the people born and reared under the shadow of the Temple and of Calvary, are, instead of being helped to the Saviour by their nativity in these places, rather hindered from coming to Him! And as a result of man's perversions and perverseness, the land that should go far to interpret God's loving purpose in the Gospel of His Son (and does do so to the intelligent and unfettered soul) is to the native untutored folk here a stumbling block and a rock of offence.

Without this seemingly unnecessary handicap, the intellectual and moral condition of these people offers sufficient difficulties to satisfy the most strenuous. Ignorance lacks only a small per cent of being unanimous and its twin-brother, poverty, is co-extensive with it. And with the narrow vision, ambition cannot thrive and in the homes of penury, hope fights hard to live, and as a result the people become listless, inert, and stolid. To see the dullness and deadness of any people is painful enough, but to see these things in this land of spiritual vision and apostolic achieve-

ment is too pathetic for words. Under these unroseate circumstances, the work of winning to Christ these millions is being prosecuted. The oldest and largest work is that by the Church of England. I speak only of Protestant missions. My opportunity of first-hand knowledge was all too limited, yet what I saw and heard was doubtless typical of the whole. Several of our party went over the English College in Jerusalem and spent a pleasant hour with its earnest young president. The college is young, small, in hired quarters, and hardly a real college, yet doing good work and with as encouraging a prospect as many another institution of similar character. The opposition which was most disheartening to me was that existing between this institution and the Bishop Gobat School, also under the Church of England and situated in Jerusalem. These rival schools, as I was informed by disinterested parties, are carrying on a contest between high and low churchism! What a pity the question of candles, phylacteries and foolishness had not been left beyond the English channel so as not to confuse and hinder in giving the cup of salvation to the thirsting ones in the land of Jesus.

We had a glimpse of the church and hospital at Nablus (Shechem) and met several of the workers there. But one of the best as well as the largest works of the Missionary Society is in Nazareth. We had time to visit only the girls' orphanage. This is ideally located, with beautiful grounds and ample buildings and most efficiently managed by some English ladies who were as hospitable to us as they are devoted to these seventy fatherless little girls of Nazareth. Besides the three places mentioned, this church has workers also in Jaffa, Haifa, Bethlehem and many country villages. There are forty-five day schools for boys and girls (the sexes have separate schools), two boarding schools for boys and three for girls. This educational department in point of the number of missionaries as well as efficiency

most impressed me. Medical missions, with nine physicians, a number of nurses, and two hospitals, come next in size at least, while last, numerically, come the eight English clergymen. In the regular preaching, the work struck me, in comparison with the other departments, as being very much under-manned, and for this reason, if not others, as being the least aggressive form of the Missions' work.

The Christian and Missionary Alliance has a small work in Jerusalem, Hebron and Beersheba. In the first two places schools are conducted, in the first of which some of us spent part of an afternoon; while in the hall of the Mission school in Hebron our party was kindly permitted to eat their lunch and rest several hours. These workers are few in number, and while their church relation is anomalous and open to criticism, they are self-sacrificing and red hot in their evangelistic zeal.

The German Lutherans have a number of semi-mission or philanthropic institutions in Jerusalem, though according to my informant, their attention is paid largely to German colonists and pilgrims.

Perhaps Palestine is better manned than the majority of mission fields, yet considering the peculiar difficulties, the world-wide interest in this land and the fields white unto harvest, one could not help wishing here a larger and more aggressive work. At the same time, after seeing so many corrupt forms of religion and so much irreligion, for the few sacrificing lives our hearts were glad, and were persuaded that their fruits will certainly be larger as the years go by.

Our Church has no financial part in any work in this country. Yet for the sake of these Christless thousands in the land that gave us Jesus, may each of us feel a new interest, and forget not in our supplications to remember these fainting ones under sin's heavy load and the missionary endeavor in their behalf.

MOHAMMEDANISM.

This letter does not purport to be critical or scholarly, but aims only to give some of the impressions that came to the writer during the six weeks' journeyings in the lands of the Mosque and the Minaret. For impressed we were. None but dead men could be unimpressed.

One thought that would not leave me, is that Mohammedanism as a religion is a genius. A twin thought and one inseparable from its mate is, that it is an evil genius. The history of this religion from its beginning in the seventh century till it numbers 225,000,000 followers today, or one-seventh of the human family, is startling. Besides overrunning Africa, Asia, part of Europe, and possessing a thousand islands in many seas, we have over a quarter of a million under our own Stars and Stripes in the Philippines. This brief statement proves the genius of Islam just as a little scrutiny of the fruitage of these thirteen centuries will prove how evil a genius it has been and is.

There have occurred to me a number of phases, making up this composite genius, and for what they are worth they are briefly given below.

First. Its Geographical Center—Mecca. It may seem an indifferent thing that this religion has a local world-capital which is to every believer the center of the world. Yet this doubtless has been and certainly today is a most powerful unifying factor. Thither they go from all over the Moslem world, and in so doing gain for themselves great merit. The fact that Mecca is isolated and extremely hard to get to but enhances the value to the pilgrim by increasing the difficulties to be overcome. The prayer-niche in every Mosque and every worshipper in prayer, faces Mecca,

so that the architecture of one and the physical attitude of the other brings before the faithful a picture of the Holy City, his Jerusalem, the citadel of his great prophet. A concrete capital appeals mightily to man who is so largely concrete.

Second. Another thing, seemingly insignificant, which helps to make powerful this faith is its short epigrammatic shibboleth: "There is no God but one, and Mohammed is his prophet." The child learns it among his first lessons. The most ignorant know it and the scholarly know little more. Each devout worshipper repeats it thirty-five times, five times every day, and it is the battle cry of the soldier as he rushes into death. As Mecca among places is the center of the Moslem world, so this shibboleth is the heart of the Moslem creed.

Third. In few particulars is this Eastern faith more wonderful than in its adaptability to the Oriental temperament. They like form, and the five daily calls to prayer, the ablutions and other requirements satisfy this demand. They grow from listlessness into stoicism and find this disposition met in the fatalism of Mohamet. In common with his Western brother, the man in the East loves self-merit and this desire is gratified, too, while no religious duty imposed by his religion is much more to his liking than the fighting enjoined by his creed, or at least by its history. The Oriental is superstitious to the last degree, but not so much that his religion doesn't satiate him in this commodity and still have some to spare.

Fourth. Their method of religious education (and that is nearly the only kind they have) may violate every rule of pedagogy but it accomplishes wonders in the way they wish it. Their method seems to be to memorize the Koran. Child, youth, even old men do it. In the Arab University in Cairo, with its twelve thousand students, I saw every age from seven years to seventy and seven—or to old gray-

headed men at least—swaying their bodies back and forth as they mumbled over portions of the Koran. The Koran is magnified till it stands out before them unrivaled. From their standpoint they know it and believe in it absolutely, consequently when it commands or prohibits, the Moslem world obeys to an extent truly remarkable. And, by the way, what wonders they have wrought by this method in behalf of their faith is an illustration, if extreme, of what we Presbyterians may secure for our precious faith by a greater fidelity in memorizing the Word of God and the Catechisms.

Fifth. Their Shibboleth has been called the great truth and the great lie. It is well described so. And on the strength of that truth, which appeals to every rational man with irresistible force, that is seen in nature and in man, the great lie rode in. Mohamet so joined in unholy union these two statements, that the true one might tow down the centuries the false one, till aided by unbelief and lust it should grow in strength to go in its own power. In an age of oncoming idolatry, Islam's genius showed itself by putting paramount a much needed doctrine, "There is but one God;" and showed this genius to be evil by linking to it the lie, "Mohamet is his prophet."

Sixth. Following a suggestion from the preceding paragraph, we find still another phase of this evil genius. Mohamet, who came in frequent if not daily contact with Jews and Christians, instead of antagonizing them by utter rejection of the Bible, was shrewd enough to take from the Scriptures (accepted in whole or in part by these sects) some of its greatest characters, such as Noah, Abraham, David and Christ. These characters he remolded according to his own fancy which meant their distortion and subordination to himself. In an hour's conversation with an intelligent Moslem, he seemed greatly shocked and protested vigorously when I asked him his reason for not accepting Christ. "We do believe in Christ, but He is not di-

vine; He did not die and therefore did not make any atonement. . . . And last and greatest is Mohamet." Thus has this religion thrived, not by directly denying God's Word, but by subtly changing it or part of it into a lie.

Seventh. To add only one more phase, Mohammedanism is an easy religion and man likes that kind. Its morals are loose. The founder himself taught by precept and example how and when the sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth and possibly other of the Commandments could be piously broken. This license to sin under the cover of religion appealed to the Eastern sinner who wanted to sin and at the same time be religious. Poor carnal man loves the carnal, and this religion accommodates this propensity—sanctifies his carnality, so to speak.

"And its fruits?" you say. Judged by this scriptural meter, the tree of Islam is one of the sourest of wild crabs. It is self-condemned. Its a long dark story—many of these fruits I have read of, some I have seen. There is blood, rivers of blood—not sacrificial or sacrificing—but to satiate cruelty, rapine, lust and to spread the faith! Deadening conservatism, superstition, fanaticism—these are painfully apparent in Egypt, Palestine, Syria and Turkey today.

Other marks of this evil genius are degradation of woman, brutalizing of man, and spoliation of home. Poverty of every kind is found everywhere in its wake—poverty of material wealth in some of the richest lands of the world, impoverishment of mind, illiteracy being all but a universal blight in Moslem lands and worst of all poverty of moral and spiritual graces.

And if one asks (as he must when he lives in this atmosphere a few weeks), how did Islam arise so near to the land of the Bible and so thoroughly overpower this and all contiguous countries, the answer is not far to seek. The Christian church had been planted in Arabia, as well as in Egypt, Asia Minor and Syria ,and of course Palestine, but

it did what Christ warned the seven churches of Asia against, corrupting doctrine, and consequently Christian living and activity. With a corrupted creed, a compromising life and inevitably a non-missionary spirit, the Church of Jesus Christ was in time run out of its first and what should have been its strongest territory, the land of its nativity. Can any one read history here and see not a solemn warning for the Church of today?

Against this religion, strongly entrenched, the scattered missionary forces have been quietly working and praying and—waiting. The full victory is not today, nor probably tomorrow, but its futurity does not affect its certainty. But the past is not without its trophies. Though the missions to this pagan faith are probably less known, their workers have not been less patient and persevering and heroic than those to India, China and Africa. Of missions in Egypt and Palestine I have spoken in previous letters; of missions in Syria and Turkey I have not time to speak at length. I may add, however, that I heard a good sermon by a big Irish Presbyterian missionary in a native church in that most fanatical Moslem city—Damascus, saw beside the immense ruins of heathen temples at Baalbec a mission school and church and was shown over the magnificent Protestant Syrian College at Beirut with its 848 students from all over the Turkish Empire.

Back of politics, I was told more than once, that the leavening work of this college and Roberts' College at Constantinople, was the primary reason of last year's revolution, which resulted in the overthrow of old Abdul Hamid and his miserable regime. We can often see improvements in matters of liberty and civilization more plainly than spiritual life and advance, but as effect must follow ade-

quate cause, so are there the fruits of redemption among this obdurate people. And these new proofs of God's power, and seals of His blessing are also earnest of what will be when His church by faith, prayer, and obedience, fully witnesses here of the Christ.

FOUR SUNSETS.

I dare not say they were more beautiful than some all of us have seen in North Carolina; not more beautiful, but different. And I am foolishly attempting to give some idea of them to those who were not with me to see and enjoy them.

We had had a strenuous day, riding donkeys out across the Nile Valley into the desert to see the Sakkara Pyramid. And when we were back to the Nile and aboard our boat, the afternoon was far spent. Down this great river for fifteen miles we were lazily riding to Cairo. Hardly were we half way when a silence came over our party as all eyes turned to watch the sun about to drop into the yellow sands of the Lybian desert. There was present the charm of the Nile as its waters lapped our boat. There was the beauty of green-fringed banks, almost black in the dying light, while here and yonder were clumps of quaint homes of still quainter people; beyond the blossoming valley could be seen one or two projecting points of barren sand dunes, above was a cloudless sky, and diffused between our feasting eyes and the sun of this closing day, was a light, soft and restful.

Suddenly, as if anxious to escape our impertinent stare, bigger and softer the sun grew as faster and faster he hurried our of our sight. Now he touches Lybia; now is half buried in its sand. Look! only his eyes and forehead are seen as he gives us a parting peep. Another moment—a golden crescent, a point, a glow; then a sigh, a murmur of admiration from all as one, and that fair Egyptian day lay dead.

To add a further interest as well as beauty, after the sun was gone in the west, we saw just out of the Arabian Desert on the east, the full orbed vestal of night, smiling her greetings at us and proffering her help to guide us safely down the Nile.

Few spots in our itinerary were all of our party more anxious to see than the Sea of Galilee. Rounding a low green mountain, we caught our first view of this sea, nestling far below us. It was raining, and in the rain we alighted on its bank and in the soaking weeds and grass, ate our lunch. While waiting for the tents to arrive and to be pitched, some of us, despite the warning clouds, put out in boats for Capernaum, eight miles away. It rained harder and harder, and Galilee showed she had not forgotten how to shake herself into a tempest. But on we went, though some were sick and others, if not scared, at least were nervous. Returning late in the afternoon, the wind and rain had ceased and the clouds had become leaden. Our little boat, hugging the shore, came opposite the plain looking westward that lies between Magdala and Bethsaida. Then suddenly the sun, though hidden, blazed from behind the clouds, with a glory that diffused itself down to and across the little sea. It was a sunset different from any I had ever seen. The effect was somewhat as if some city between which and you a great mountain intervened should be burning in the night. No clear outline, or rivalling colors on jealous clouds were there, but all about one rich, soft, mellow glory. As this light grew from dimness into darkness, we filled the evening air with that beautiful hymn, "Sweet Galilee," while the steady stroke of our sturdy boatmen were bearing us, wet, tired, hungry and happy to our tents on the shore below Tiberias.

And we will be pardoned, I know, when we confess that there was enough sentiment in us that made it impossible to dissociate this lake from the works and words and bless-

ed presence of Him whose glory these two thousand years has lingered here and whose still hovering presence added to the charm of our first and last closing day on Galilee.

The two preceding sunsets we saw from the water, the two following from the land. Or two we saw from boats and two from trains.

All day long we had had a wild and wonderful climb out of Palestine, up rugged and desolate mountains, across Syria's plain and toward the close of day were drawing near to Damascus. Our train was going north, down a gently sloping plain; to our east were mountains, and to our west the long irregular and snow-clad backbone of Mt. Hermon. Behind this mountain the sun was soon to set. Above lofty Hermon, circling about as birds making ready for their evening perch were some banks of white clouds. Between these clouds and the mountain was a narrow clear space. The sun was making ready to cross this, then would be the end. It is foolhardy to try to describe it. I make no such attempt, but give only a hint here and there to help your imagination fill out the glory between.

The clouds, taking advantage of their height, caught great armfuls of the sun's divinest colors and flung them lavishly at our feet. The long ridge of the mountain, as the sun dropped behind it, turned from white into golden snow—golden and set with ten million diamonds as each crystal glistened and scintillated in the evening glow. Watch the colors change! The brilliant bright of the golden snow becomes richer and darker; one by one, then hundreds by hundreds, of these crystaline diamonds of ice, winked wearily at us and went to sleep, till, as our train sped on and swerved to the east, only a soft golden glow stood out before the oncoming evening star.

An early breakfast in Athens, a four hours' ride with our train skirting the Bay of Salamis and the Saronic Gulf,

a three hours' ramble among the ruins of old Corinth and we were again on train for another four hours' run to Patras, on the western shore of Greece, where our waiting ship rode at anchor in the Ionian Sea. Through olive, grape and wheat fields we sped, with mountains to our south and the quiet blue of the Corinthian Gulf to the north and beyond classic and snow-crowned Parnassas. Our fourth sunset was to be near the end of this day's journey and fitted perfectly into this beautiful Grecian scene. The fact is, the sun did not set once that afternoon, but three times. This unusual feat, added to the actual charm, is why I am telling you of it. As the sun was, as one would say, "a half-hour high," there came directly between it and our eyes a great mountain across the gulf. We saw the sun set behind this mountain; set while yet it was day. Another ten minutes as our train swiftly followed the bending track as it gripped the curving shore and we were beyond that large mountain and there over a much lower mountain was the sun with another soft good-night smile at us. Here we watched the second sunset, as the King of Day quickly dropped again out of sight and was, as we thought, hurrying on to wake up the Chinese. But as we were in a strange land and therefore expecting strange things, we kept watching to see if something else would not happen, or at least to enjoy the stealing on of darkness.

But instead of darkness we were to have another sunset. by this time our train, nearing Patras, was past this second mountain and out yonder in the Ionian Sea with five minutes more of life, was our same old sun, getting ready for his third retiring on this same day. With face bigger and beaming more than ever, giving us a gracious good night, pillowing his head on Ionia's soft and heaving bosom, he drew up the cover of the deep. And God slowly drew the curtains of the coming night and stationed about his couch

a thousand shining sentinels. And by their kindly light, in the gloaming of that Grecian evening, we disembarked from our train and the cheery lamps on our ship, awaiting us in the harbor, invited us to rest and to our further voyage.

Must not the God of these and other sunsets, be Himself a God of beauty and glory? Can these masterpieces be, with no master? How wonderful a God and one to be adored is He who with the richest pigments of earth and cloud and heaven, paints on the broad canvas of the horizon such matchless moving pictures of glory! Shall we see and praise the work and not the workman? If the handiwork so entrances, how much more the fashioning hand. So that we, as truly as David, may say, "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth His handiwork." And not alone in these isolated cases in foreign lands, but as God maketh the sun to shine and to set for the just and the unjust, and sendeth along with His blessing the early and latter rain, that one who is wise will see each succeeding day, beauty and blessings in God's world and always see above the earthly, the heavenly, in the gift the Giver, and beyond the glory that now is, the sure promise of a far exceeding glory, yet to be.

FOUR GREAT CHURCHES.

In every Southern landscape, whether country or city, one of the prominent features is the church or churches. In London and Rome, even in pagan Constantinople and Jerusalem, the places of worship stand out in bold relief from the forests of buildings. As well not go to the last two cities as not to see the Mosques of Omar and St. Sophia; and no one has been to the mighty capitals on the Thames and the Tiber who has not seen St. Paul's and St. Peter's. Of these four places of worship we wish to speak. The first two are really not churches, and the Moslem would be dreadfully insulted at his two sacred Mosques being put in the same catalogue with sanctuaries of the Infidel of the West. But if the Christian can stand it, the pagan will have to also.

It seems invidious in speaking of mosques to leave out Mahomet Ali, in Cairo, and among cathedrals, stately Notre Dame, beside the Seine. But when a volume might be written about each one of these, it seems sufficiently bold in the space of a letter to attempt these four chief places of worship.

The Mosque of Omar has its name from General Omar, not because he was particularly pious, even after the Moslem fashion, but because he wrested Jerusalem from the hand of the Christian. The other part of its name, "Mosque," is a misnomer, for in the correct sense of the word, it is not a mosque at all. It lacks the necessary minaret, and the interior, where the faithful usually worship, no human foot is allowed ever to tread.

For situation, this mosque is beautiful and even more

historic than beautiful. It is not only in Jerusalem, but on the spot in that holy city where perhaps nine-tenths or more of the interest in that city centers—the temple site. There is practical agreement that this mosque is on Moriah, where Abraham offered up Isaac, and where Solomon, Zerrubbabel and Herod built temples. Any building, be it ever so rude, in so sacred and world-affecting a locality, could not but be famous. But the Mosque of Omar so far from being rude is most imposing, of richest material, of most symmetrical proportions and of faultless design.

Of octagonal shape (each side being sixty-four feet), with many massive windows of exquisite mosaic of glass and marble, with graceful arches surmounted by an immense gilt dome, the exterior, whether viewed from the Mount of Olives in the distance, or nearer at hand, from Calvary, Zion or Moriah itself, is full of eye-satisfaction. It is said to be the finest building in Asia, and some have pronounced it the most beautiful building in existence.

The interior is entirely unique. The object of its erection seems to have been to cover and guard the "Dome of the Rock," which is alike sacred to Moslem and Christian. Directly under the dome of this mosque, guarded from intrusion by a strong railing, in subdued light approaching semi-darkness, is the natural rock (57 by 43 feet) on which for a thousand years Israel offered sacrifices. Two concentric circles of marble columns make two circular corridors around this sacred rock. The upper portion of the interior wall is an artistic design in mosaic and above that a band of deep blue on which in gilt Arabic letters are texts from the Koran. And pagan temple though it be, we found here a delicious quietness, a restful refuge and a sweet solemnity as well as a lingering echo of that Divine voice heard so often here in the long ago.

Between the Golden Horn and Marmora, in the city of

Constantine (for such is the meaning of Constantinople), hard by where two great seas and continents meet and where meet also paganism and Christianity, as well as the orient and the occident, stands magnificent St. Sophia. For more than a thousand years this city, which then lay on the Asiatic shore of the Bosphorus, was called Chalcedon, till indeed the Greeks settled on the opposite shores in Europe and called the city Byzantium. This name in turn gave way in the fourth century for the name of the great ruler of the new empire, whose capital it became. In this city of three names and three millenniums, in both Europe and Asia, and on the Golden Horn, the Bosphorus and the Sea of Marmora, swarm legends and fairly teem history of contending empires and religions. So at this meeting place of continents and seas, of races and religions, of myth and fact, on the site of an early heathen temple (and thus from time immemorial a place of worship) Constantine erected the first St. Sophia, and not willing to name it after any man, dedicated it to Christ himself under the title of Sancta Sophia, or the Holy Wisdom.

Here in 404 the eloquent Chrysostom preached and so denounced imperial sins that he was banished. The populace were so enraged by the preacher's banishment that they burned to the ground the noble structure—not a bad proceeding when the uncensorable preacher is so treated. A second building was burned in the sixth century, when Justinian built the present imposing structure. An angel is said to have given him the plan in a dream. The emperor worked with the men and angels were popularly believed to have helped. On Christmas eve, 573, the emperor entered the completed structure and exclaimed, "Solomon, I have conquered thee." For eight hundred years it continued a Christian church. After centuries of vain efforts by the Moslems, Mohammed II, in 1453, took the city and rode his horse into St. Sophia, and high on a marble column the

bloody print of his hand is still shown the traveller. The Greek altar was taken down, the minaret was erected, and every day since from it the muezzin has called the faithful to prayer.

No adequate idea can be given of this magnificent edifice. It is so enclosed on the exterior by surrounding buildings that its vastness and richness are not realized till the traveler enters. Inside, with slippered feet and hungry eyes we leisurely strolled under the vaulted dome, between rows of exquisite marble and porphyry columns and around the whole circuit of its many-niched walls. With the dome one hundred and eighty feet above our heads and broad naves before us, the impression was of vastness. Standing, as it seems, on acres of richest Persian rugs, surrounded by pillars of serpentine and porphyry, some taken from the temple of Diana in Ephesus, others from the temple of the Sun at Baalbek, besides other booty from conquered cities and above on all sides in eastern lavishness, gold figures, lettering and emblems—the impression was of richness. High on the walls in large graceful Arabic script of gold, the words: "There is but one god, and Mahomed is his prophet," silently proclaims Moslemism. While here and there, still visible despite the efforts to erase, are Christian emblems and faint yet traceable, over the former place of the altar is to be seen the gilt figure of Christ in the act of blessing —a prophecy this of the unconquerable Christ who will yet again receive worship here. To a soldier, destroying these Christian emblems, Mahomet the conqueror, killing him at a blow, said: "Let these things be; who knows but that in another age they can serve another religion than that of Islam."

On the banks of the Tiber, near the old Caesar homestead, and where dwelt also wealth and law, power and profligacy, stands the most bewilderingly wonderful building we have ever seen—St. Peter's. Joining it is the White House of Romanism, the largest palace in the world, with its more

than eleven hundred rooms. Here more powerful than the old-time Roman Emperors, lived in the middle ages the Roman Pontiff and here he still lives, though shorn of his former power. Here also dwell a small army of shrewdest diplomats and ecclesiastical statesmen, and in adjoining quarters are the famous Vatican galleries of painting and sculpture. Here in closest juxtaposition is the trinity—St. Peter's, the Vatican and the Vatican Museums—that with religion, art, architecture and music attracts the world. It was a wise, if not wily churchman who thus located St. Peter's, it was consummate genius and skill that designed and built this imperial building, it was the gold of the world that footed the bills and today it abides, a ceaseless wonder in this world so full of wonders. The Piazza of St. Peter's is a square or open court (a home-made North Carolinian would call it the front yard) surrounded by an immense colonnade of three rows of pillars, sixty-four feet high, upon the top of which are balustrades with 162 statues of various and sundry saints. In the center of this piazza is a tapering obelisk from Heliopolis, on each side of which is a generous fountain, while up a flight of steps approaching the church are statues of Paul and Peter, and on top of the church walls are large figures of Christ and the apostles. This "front yard" is spacious and regal enough to prepare you for great things within. And this preparation is no false alarm. One is here never allowed to lose sight of Peter. Within these walls he is omnipresent in emblem. Beside the statue guarding the entrance, an inimitable mosaic of him walking on the water is before the door within the vestibule, down the main nave is a bronze figure with his much-kissed toe and around the base of the central dome are the words, in Latin, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven." Further on is the Altar of St. Peter, under which some of his bones rest (his bones are in great demand, and from the various places

claiming them he must have had an extra set), and where only the Pope may read mass; still farther is the bronze throne holding the wooden chair reputed to have been used by Peter. Though figures are dead things, yet it will help to picture the vastness here to tell the complete length is 613 feet, the width 446 feet, and the interior height of the dome is 440 feet. It is said 80,000 people on Easter find standing room within these walls. This immense space from the tesselated marble floor to the emblematic designs on the arching dome and from wall to wall is filled with such a wealth of statuary, paintings, mosaics and gold decorations as to daze the ordinary mortal. All about are many chapels and altars with burning lamps and kneeling worshippers, while again the whole interior is at once a graveyard, a Catholic Hall of Fame, a gallery or series of galleries of paintings and sculpture and of music and architecture. Again I want to invoke the help of Arithmetic. The cost of the main part of this building was $60,000,000, but the whole of St. Peter's, with its priceless furnishings, is worth many times that amount. I believe it was to raise $50,000,000 for its completion that indulgences were put on the market and that a too industrious sale af this novel and popular article of commerce by one John Tetzel aroused Martin Luther, who, under God aroused Europe, which latter arousement is familiarly known as the Reformation.

One evening alone, I heard the Sistine choir sing at Vespers, as I strolled quietly around and through the sombre shadows of the tombs of popes and prelates, martyrs and confessors, when all had gone except a stray worshipper or visitor who happened like myself to have tarried late. The oncoming darkness, the smoking incense and burning candles on different altars, the silence, the solemnity, the flitting here and there with soft footfall of robed figures, made a scene or rather an experience weird, almost uncanny and unforgettable.

"Impressions?" you say. Without the slightest irre-

verence, I felt that this and similar churches have become more sights for tourists than sanctuaries for worshippers. I disliked the guides and guards, though I suppose these are necessary, the mendicants and venders, the fees and the general air of a museum or show rather than of a church. I felt when I saw the box and above it the sign, "For the decoration of the cathedral," that I'd come nearer giving something to defray the expense of taking down some of the surplus of the decorative commodity. It seemed to me these obscured rather than revealed God. I felt that religion so near its alleged fount should have less of formalism and more of spiritual spontaneity. And I felt that such magnificence did not comport with such misery and poverty as abounds in Italy. I felt like saying with one of old, though I hope from a purer motive. "Why was not this . . . sold . . . and given to the poor." Yet for whatever of God any soul may have found, so far from denying, would I rather rejoice. I was glad it is not mine to judge. And in the presence of all but infinite complexity, I felt grateful for the simplicity of my North Carolina church. And until the day God is pleased to revive and purge the worship of these many millions of my brother-men who bow at this and kindred shrines, may we trust that through the labyrinth of ceremony and the maze of encumbering adornment that they might not entirely miss seeing and knowing Jesus the Christ.

St. Paul's—time and space positively forbid.

FOUR EUROPEANISMS.

Like our country Europe and the farther East have quite an assortment of isms and like ours theirs are good, bad and indifferent. At least I am positive about the bad variety and I trust that the first mentioned kind was more numerous than I actually saw. To see and study these systems of social, political and moral order was to me more interesting than to ramble through castles. The former are factors in the titanic struggle of the present. The latter only survivors of the finished combat of yesterday.

Militaryism.

One of the most striking differences, occupationally speaking, between Europe and America is the absence here and the omnipresence there of the soldier. One may travel thousands of miles here and not see a soldier, much less forts and barracks, but in Europe the traveller encounters with a monotonous regularity battleships by sea and forts and soldiers by land. We frequently saw from our car windows cavalry and infantry on the march through the country or drilling on their numerous parade grounds. They swarmed in every city and we soon learned whenever we saw an immense barn-like building to ask no questions but call it "barracks" and go on. I know full well how the ordinary mortal hates figures, yet they are necessary evils and sometimes serve you a good turn. For instance, the figures I am going to give below will fill this column about as thick as the foreign landscape is filled with soldiers and so help you to some appreciation of how big and important is my first ism. The standing army of Europe is nearly 5,000,000 men, while that of the United States is only 56,000. That is its size in time of peace when there's noth-

ing to do but drill and make faces across the frontier at the other fellow. The military strings are so fixed that on a war footing the armies of Europe number only 37,000,000 men! And very naturally this costs something. The military bill of Europe in time of peace is in round numbers $2,000,000,000 per year. That is, two thousand millions, or enough to build 20,000 good sized cotton mills or, to better purpose, enough to flood the heathen world with the gospel and have a snug sum to help Europe feed her large pauper class. France's army in time of peace is 613,000; in other words, though smaller in area than Texas, her army is eleven times as big as that of the whole United States. Italy, less than one-thirty-fourth the size of our country, has 260,000 men in her army or nearly five times as many as we have. In proportion to area Italy's army is 170 times as large as ours. And all these thousands just to protect against the general public, Vesuvius, earthquake-riven Reggio, a grotto or two and a few ruins! Switzerland, less than one-third the size of North Carolina, stuck on the top of the dome of Europe, where an invading army if unopposed could hardly get to, you would think would have a very small army. Yet her standing (and sliding) army numbers 145,000, or nearly three times that of our land, which comprises virtually a continent beside governing great islands in distant oceans. But those glaciers must be defended at all hazards!

These five million men out of the producing and in the consuming class have helped to make extremely grave the economic question which stirs and threatens Europe today. To this we shall refer again. Then not less important and far-reaching it seems to me, is the social, moral and religious problems raised by such large armies. These men impressed by law into the service, away from home and its healthful ties, out of the ordinary and natural pursuits create a difficult moral problem. For the soldier's camp is by no means a camp-meeting, neither a Sunday school, but religiously speaking a difficult and unfavorable field for moral and spir-

itual culture. And I do not write unsympathetically about the army for I am a soldier myself—have I not fought valiantly for three summers at Morehead City and last summer at Chickamauga with the invincible First North Carolina Infantry?—but like all sensible people, I recognize the necessity even in this land for a standing army and even in these pipingest times of peace. I quite love the soldier of my own land but the illimitable magnitude of the armies of Europe, all but overcame me.

Clericalism.

This ism—one of the sleekest of the lot—got onto my nerves, too. Next to the soldier in visibility and multiplicity seemed to be the priest, who, uniformed, was like the soldier, an easy mark for identification. Sometimes they went singly, more often by twos and not infrequently in droves or squads. From the signs I saw and the expressions I heard, though its a sad statement to make, yet I believe it is true at least in Italy and France that the average man hates the clergy and the church. In Rome, I was told that many who keep the forms of religion, in their hearts mistrust and dislike the church and its leaders. True, in this land such men are to be found, but they are exceptional rather than general. And we all know that the church and her ministry in doing their duty will often make enemies. That suggests the question, why this unfriendly attitude of Europe's masses towards the church? (By church I mean, unless expressly stated, the Roman Catholic church). No one statement can give the whole answer. Her corrupt creed and life, her cumbrous forms go far towards answering the question, but the reason I wish to speak of, specially, is because the church is in politics up to the hilt and is a past-master at the game. Thus the church is a party, rather a leader, in engendering the most bitter partisan prejudices and enmities that can characterize politics. And rightly, the church must take its part of the "cussing" and bitterness. And usually the church,

especially in Latin Europe, is with the classes against the masses, with the reactionary against the progressive, and with the mediaeval against the modern. And the reason the church is in politics, ordinarily at least, is the same reason the politician is in it—for self. This makes of the church and religion, too (for the masses know nothing about religion apart from the Roman Catholic church) a political issue and a very mean issue at that. All are familiar with the bitter struggle that led up to the separation of Church and State in France two years ago. Some will recall the fierce struggle in Belgium in the recent spring elections, how bitterly Romanism fought for continued supremacy and how narrowly she won. Towering above all other questions in that election was what might be termed the European Issue —Clericalism. In Italy the same feeling of anti-clericalism seemed to be strong, but for lack of a leader, the opportune time and perhaps other reasons, is lying low at present. Right now Spain is on the point of revolution—the one issue being clericalism. The Spanish Premier sizes up the situation in these words, "Different political groups have different ideas, but they are one against clericalism."

I may be mistaken, but rising above all Protestant, much more Presbyterian bias, the condition of the church generally in Europe impressed me as being deplorably sad, and incompetent and hopeless in grappling with the present conditions. But this darkness would be really delightful if one knew it presaged another Reformation.

Socialism.

Prominent among the progeny of militaryism, relict of the late feudalism, is socialism. This is a very large family whose members have varying degrees of badness and perhaps of goodness. Some of these socialistic children are repulsive and others have more attractive features. So many kinds of socialism makes it impossible to give an accurate definition. It is an economic and social revolt against the old order of things in both Church and State

and to help carry its point has, of course, entered politics. Every law-making body of Europe has Socialistic members and socialism polls in Europe nearly 6,000,000 votes and has 650 papers. Germany alone has 3,000,000 socialist votes, next in strength comes France, then Austria-Hungary, Belgium, Italy, Great Britain, etc. The writer is many leagues removed from being a socialist, yet if his lot had been cast in France, Germany or Italy, he would be very much nearer one than he is in this land of civil and religious freedom and of equal opportunity. Without excusing any of the extremes of socialism or apologizing for its errors, it does seem that conditions in Europe furnish considerable warrant for the rise of this new cult. Human nature can stand a great deal, but it can't and happily won't stand everything, and against the mediaevalism of Church and State, represented in part by militaryism and clericalism of which we have spoken, socialism stands as a protest—a misdirected and perverted protest perhaps, yet a protest vigorous and not without results. And the wise prince and priest instead of sneering at it will study themselves to find what in them makes possible the rise of such a vagary. To one reared in the thought of the South—the old South to large degree, blessed land where among other things freedom means the freedom from so motley a gang of isms of malcontent and selfishness—socialism, its name, principles, and methods were repugnant, yet may it not be that in the strange providence of God, that He is mining Europe with this new explosive for an epochal overturning, which will clear away some of the hindering rubbish of dead centuries and usher in a happier day?

Atheism.

This is the darkest ism of all. I know the danger, Elijah-like, of saying, "I, even I only, am left." And I am therefore making a liberal allowance for the personal equation. After all these precautionary steps, it still seems beyond doubt that there is abroad over Europe and in high favor,

a spirit of irreligion reaching very often to the extreme of the baldest Atheism. After reading the signs, as well as between the lines, and after receiving indefinable intuitions. reluctantly I had to believe that a sadly large multitude of Europe's seething millions have settled down to a life in whose theory and practice there is no god. This condition, whether called Atheism or by some softer term, has as one of the contributing causes—clericalism.

Starting from the Roman church, with its out-of-touchness with man, many millions have drifted, till they became churchless. Here these spiritual wanderings were but begun. On and on they would go, some to a pure godlessness, some to a Christless rationalism, other to commercialism or pleasure, till a multitude whom no man can number can be described by no better words than Paul's "having no hope and without God in the world." And that I would call Atheism. Of course there are bright spots to break the dreadful monotony of darkness. Europe has her remnant according to the election of grace and no one dare say it is a small remnant either. Again the writer has no figures to go by, even figures of church connection being far from conclusive. The traveler, in studying the heart condition of a continent, must judge largely by impressions, where it is easy to err and impossible to be accurate, much less infallible. And the foregoing is given only as impressions, yet impressions not hastily, but seriously and reluctantly formed.

In our own land there is very much godlessness, but for her comparatively pure religion, her separation of Church and State, her freedom, and her innocence of possessing so much governmental rubbish and ecclesiastical junk, I came home devoutly thankful. And above these learned nations across the Atlantic, with their ancient lore, it seemed to me that the world must look, not to Rome or Berlin or Paris, for the path to civil liberty, and for the matured fruit of the religion of Jesus, and for the evangelization of the world, but under God to that newly chosen people of God's providence, in the West, where far from the ruins of empires and religions, God has in mercy cast our lot.